

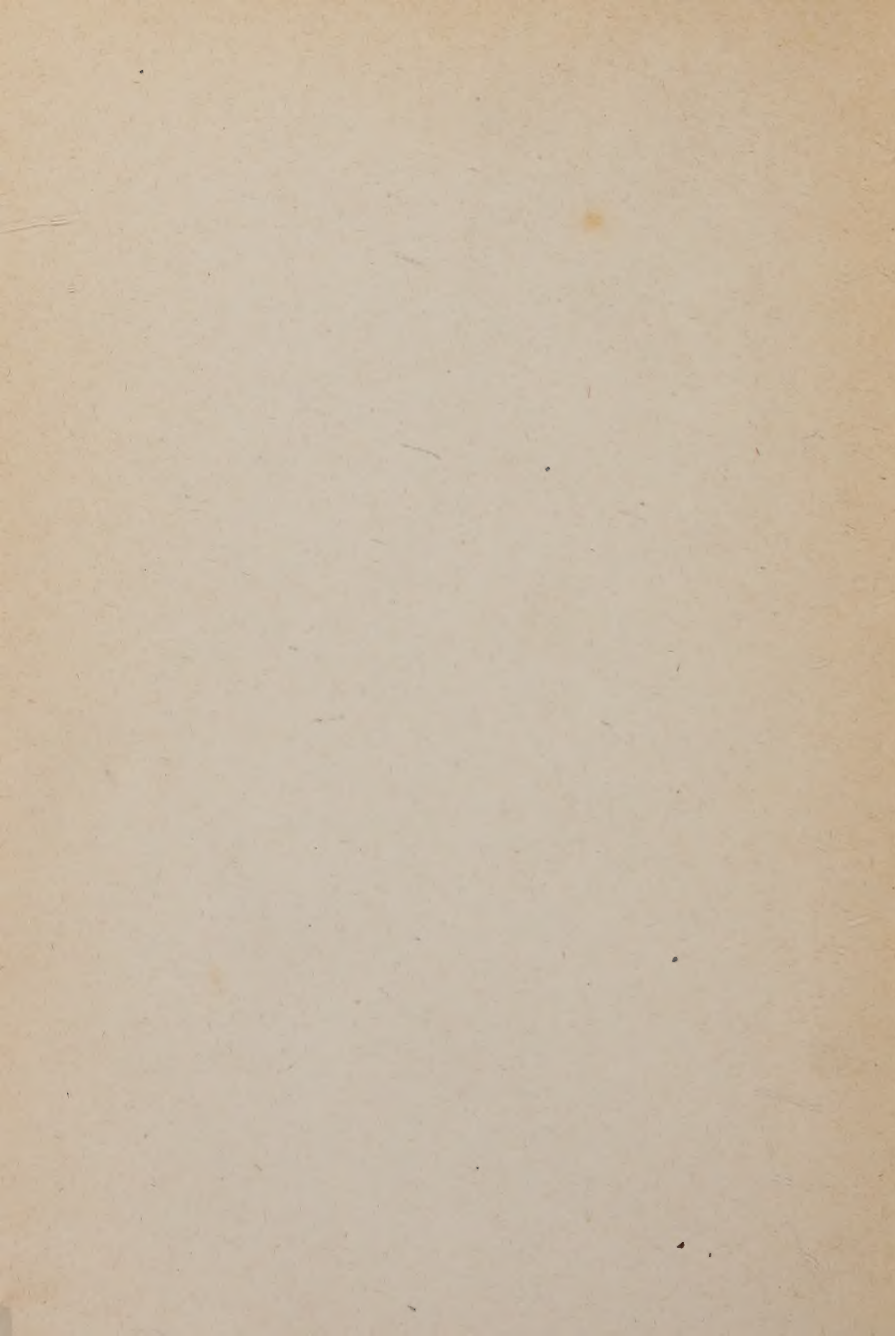
BE YE ALSO READY





Paul Breddin















# BE YE ALSO READY

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## A COLLECTION OF FUNERAL ADDRESSES

Translated from the German.

### WITH AN APPENDIX THE BURIAL SERVICE Arranged in Accordance with Standard Liturgical Forms By R. NEUMANN

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Revised and Enlarged Edition.

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## I.

### A CHILD BORN DEAD.

Acts 21: 14.

“The will of the Lord be done!” With the resignation expressed in this passage of Scripture, we stand by the grave of this child, which was born dead.

The hour of its birth was also the hour of its death. The moment which should have given it life has given it a prey to dissolution. Instead of a cradle, a casket has become its resting place. And thus all the joy and hope of the parents have been destroyed. Instead of celebrating the birth of their child, they must follow his little body to the grave. Not joy, but sadness, has he brought to their hearts.

The will of the Lord be done! It was His will that this child should not see the light of this world, and His will cannot be wrong. Even though it may seem hard that your hopes should have been destroyed and your joy changed into sorrow, you may yet believe that what God does, is well done. The more calmly and humbly you submit to the will of God, the more will this dispensation become a blessing to you; and at last, you will praise His holy name, even though He has sent you sorrow.

And in the dark hour of this child's birth, did you not feel the strong hand of the Lord, in spite of your



affliction? Was it not His loving hand which saved the life of the mother and graciously preserved her- He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it. Although your child has not been spared to you, you should lift grateful hearts and hands toward heaven and praise God's holy name, because He has averted a greater loss. He, whose hand inflicts wounds, binds them up again, and will gladden your hearts once more by restoring the mother of this child to health and strength. May He produce eternal blessings through the sadness of this birth, and your grief over the loss of your child. Amen.

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## II.

### AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD, BORN DEAD.

In Christ beloved friends! We have assembled to commit to the ground a child which, according to the wise providence of God, did not see the light of the world. Sadly afflicted we bow before the holy God whose ways are truth and mercy. Generally we regard children as the gift of God, and feel happy over their birth, sorrowful over their death. But when God grants us a gift, which we take ourselves despite His holy laws, without human or divine right, we can never enjoy it with our whole heart. And when He takes it from us even while He is giving it, we justly mourn over our unholy intrenchment upon His rights, and adore His majesty,

confessing that He is the Ruler of the universe and will restore a broken law. If we commend this child to the grace of God, we do so, trusting in the promise of the Saviour: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." At the same time, however, we do so with the prayer which is included in the petition, "Hallowed be Thy name," namely: Hallowed be Thy holy laws. Amen.

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### III.

#### AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.

Mathew 18: 3.

When this child was born a few months ago, many tears were shed on his account; tears of shame and repentance by the mother, tears of bitter woe by you, dear grandparents, over the fall of your daughter. And if he had died then, you would probably not have mourned. But the child's life was spared; it grew, and you did not let the poor innocent babe suffer for the stain of its birth. You cared for him, and learned to love him. The heart of the mother too, was opened toward him, so that she sought and found comfort in the dear eyes of her child. And now you mourn again; the child has departed from you and brought sorrow into your family circle by his going, as he once did by his coming. I sympathize with you, dear friends, but the Lord's ways are best. He had thought of peace toward the child and toward you when He called him unto himself. Plainly

we can hear these solemn words of the Lord addressed to the mother and to us all: Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

As little children! He lies as peacefully in his cas-  
ket, as if he were sleeping. And, in fact, he is sleeping  
in the arms and bosom of the gentle Shepherd, for he  
died as a child of God. How will it be when we are  
called? Shall we bear on our countenances the expres-  
sion of peace and blessed expectation of eternal life?  
We, too, have been baptized, and through baptism have  
been placed into the arms of Jesus. On the day of con-  
firmation we rejoiced over this fact, and gladly, will-  
ingly resolved to walk with Him, the faithful bishop of  
our souls. But how far behind us does this time lie, and  
what has become of those resolutions, those vows? Where  
is the faith of childhood? And what paths have we trod-  
den since then? Pleasant roads, leading finally to perdi-  
tion, into the desert, into thorns?

But the gentle Shepherd followed us, and now He  
stands before us and exclaims: Poor, lost child! Re-  
turn! If you have learned what sorrow and grief are  
caused by forsaking the Lord your God; if you have  
experienced how the world passes away and the lust  
thereof, how an ocean of sadness follows a drop of sweet-  
ness, how the vows of faithfulness in the world are lies—  
then return, while yet there is time. Return by honest  
repentance to the baptismal grace, become as this child,  
little, humble, and poor before your God. Seize the  
hand which the Lord offers to you. Then all will be

well; the kingdom of heaven will be open to you again; you will be able to pray again; your peace will return, the derision of the world will not affect you; you will forget those things which are behind and reach forth unto those things which are before you. Ah, my friends! Often have we heard the call to repentance: Return, return! Let us not hear it in vain now when it sounds into broken and bleeding hearts by the casket of this child. Amen.

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#### IV.

#### A FIRST-BORN SON.

Exodus 22: 29.

The words of our text are a command of God Almighty, originally addressed to the children of Israel. The Lord had led His people out of the bondage of Egypt, after He had slain in one night the first-born of the Egyptians, both of men and beasts. In order to remind the people of the night in which they left the land of servitude, all the first-born of the children of Israel were sanctified unto the Lord and every first-born male child of each family belonged to the Lord. This command of the Lord, however, was abrogated, when He made us free from the law through His first and only begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour. For in Him everyone who is born is to be sanctified unto God; through baptism, every child which is born into this world is to be given to the Lord—throughout time and to all eternity.

Thus you, through holy baptism, placed your boy in the fatherly arms of your God. And He who has said: "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not," has accepted him as His child. But now He has taken this child, which was in truth His own, unto himself again. Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee! And He says to the parents: "The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me." True you feel sad over the loss of this child. But call to mind that pious patriarch, Abraham, to whom the promise had been given that in him and his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Think of the joy which filled his heart, when his wife Sarah bore him the first, the only son of promise. Yet scarcely had the child grown up, when the voice of the Lord came to him: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt offering." And though an unspeakable sadness seized his soul, Abraham was obedient to the word of his God, and prepared to do what the Lord asked of him. Because God required his son as a sacrifice, Abraham was willing to give him up, and yet did not doubt the love and promise of his God.

And now the Lord says to you: The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. Do you give up your child in humble submission? Behold, since the only begotten Son of God came into the world, since He redeemed you and your child from the power of the devil, since He closed the gates of hell and opened the doors of heaven—it is easy to obey the voice of the Lord. For



now we know whither our loved ones go, when the Lord calls them from this world.

Therefore, do not mourn or weep over your child; he is with the Lord, whose own he is. He is far better sheltered and cared for by God's gracious hand than he could have been in this world. In heaven there is no sin, no temptation, no sorrow, no sadness, no mourning, but only joy and gladness in the Lord. Do not lament the loss of your child, but rejoice with him and for him, because he has been enabled so soon to enter that joy which shall last to all eternity, and of which we all may partake, if we are faithful unto the end, if we be converted and become as little children. All the pain which your boy had to suffer even during his short life, is passed forever; no grief shall ever afflict him again. Now he is waiting for you, dear parents, at the gates of heaven, desiring to show you the glory of God, and to lead you to Christ, his Saviour. May the thought of your blessed child guide you even on this earth to the Friend of sinners, that at last you may live with Him before His throne forever.

May we all, who have assembled today to mourn with the parents over the loss of this child, follow the warning voice of the Master; may we become as little children; may we receive everything, be it joy, be it affliction, as coming from the Lord to prepare and win us for His kingdom. May He accept us all through grace. Amen.

V.

A LITTLE BOY WHO DIED FROM THE EFFECTS  
OF A FALL.

I SAM. 3:18.

It is the Lord! thus the believing soul speaks, not taken away in its youthful days by an unfortunate casualty, which the superficial observer might call a sad accident. The hearts of the parents are wounded and bleeding; for, after many previous losses they have now had to offer a still greater sacrifice, and we mourn and lament with them. Deep, dark night overclouds our souls as though the sun of divine love and faithfulness had disappeared from the firmament of our life. For, we think, it would have been easy for His fatherly love to have warded off this great calamity, and to have given His angels charge over the child, to guard it with invisible guiding hands against such an unfortunate fall. Where was the protecting care of God and His divine providence? Or is it true, that there is a mysterious power, a fate, which is stronger than the divine power and our prayers which ascend to heaven? Dear friends! I entreat you in His name to banish such dismal thoughts from your heart; they are not given by God, but by the evil one, and do not afford peace, but rather aggravate the bitterness and sorrow of the soul. No, let the light of Christian knowledge shine into your souls, that you may be enlightened and that your eyes may see the hand of the living God even in the deep sorrow of a bitter bereavement.

It is the Lord! thus the believing soul speaks, not only amid blessings and joys, but also when calamity and misfortune apparently overwhelm it. It is the Lord, beloved, who has called this dear child home, who has allowed this misfortune to befall it, who has taken him so quickly, so sadly. Do not unnecessarily accuse men; do not say that they are to blame for this accident; for thus you might be led to injustice and to uncharitable judgment, without receiving comfort and the peace of God for your soul. Christ himself has said, that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your heavenly Father's knowledge. Are you, His children not better than many sparrows? Where could we derive comfort if the immortal soul of man could be overcome by any casualty, or could be arbitrarily deprived of the precious gifts of health and of earthly existence? No, the same God and Lord of life who called the soul and the body of this child into being, has also guarded this gift so that nothing could harm it against His will. We have the firm assurance that it was God the Lord, who assented to the sad and sudden departure of the child. Let us remember that God does not afflict His children willingly, but sympathizes with them. He desired, however, to call unto himself the soul of your child at an early age. You are to regard the loss of your child as a sacrifice, which you should present to the Lord in humility and in faith, realizing that this world is a vale of tears and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.

“It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him

good." What seemeth Him good, is nothing else but our salvation, our eternal redemption. He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but desires that he should be brought to a knowledge of the truth and to the possession of life eternal. For this purpose He elected this child in holy baptism, and this end He has gained even while leading him through the dark valley of a sad and early death. God has taken the soul of your child to Himself into the habitations of peace, and now no sorrow shall ever afflict him. He lives in heavenly places, where there is no sin nor sorrow, and where he shall grow up, a perfect man in Christ, without temptation or sin. The lines after all, are fallen to him in pleasant places, and he has gained by losing this early life. The Lord hath done with him what seemeth Him good in His love and mercy. May this be your consolation in this hour of affliction. May your heart find comfort in the loving heart of the Father, so that you may trust Him and be willing to bear the heaviest burden to His glory. God has peace and blessedness for you, just as He has for your child. His ways are strange, but are always best. The comfort and peace of God be with you and enable you to say at the grave of your child: "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." Amen.

VI.

BOY, FIVE YEARS OLD, WHO DIED ON CHRIST-  
MAS EVE, DURING A SCARLET  
FEVER EPIDEMIC.

I Sam 3: 18.

Today we celebrate Christmas. Usually, it is a happy day for children, when they surround the glittering Christmas-tree, the weak symbol of the glory of the Lord revealed to the shepherds; and a happy day for parents when they behold the joy of the little ones. But this Christmas is a sad one for us. Or was not your gladness overclouded, when you thought of all the sad hearts in our town, and remembered that almost daily you followed the remains of a child to the grave, not knowing how soon you would have to stand by the grave of one of your own loved ones? This is an especially sad occasion for the deeply afflicted parents. Five years ago today they bore this child to the temple of the Lord for holy baptism. Then their hearts rejoiced because the Lord received him as His child. Today the child is again presented to the Lord. What thoughts are in your hearts? Perhaps not praise and thanksgiving, and yet not mourning and complaint, as you yourselves have told me. No, though the fountain of tears be opened, something within you says: It is the Lord, let Him do as seemeth Him good. For this reason I have selected this passage for this occasion.

If, at the present time, when we of this town commend our children more ardently than usual to the care



of God, and praise His name when He watches over them, a child returns home weeping and complaining, and we see it has scarlet fever, how terrible the discovery is for the parents!

But when the disease breaks forth immediately with all force, as in the case of the deceased child, deranging the mind; when the terrible heart-rending struggle begins, and the first word of the physician is: "It means death, there is no hope," and when still death does not come to relieve the suffering, and the struggle becomes extreme, do we not then kneel by the bedside and pray: O Lord, deliver Thy servant?

In that hour how do those feel who know but this one thing: It is scarlet fever, it is death! We Christians know more: it is the Lord! Not one hair can fall from our head without His will. We have a more definite hope than Eli. If at this time the angel of wrath passes over our houses, it is not our precaution, nor the strong constitution of our children, but the Lord's mercy which preserves us; if sorrow enters our homes, it is not our fault, but the Lord's—will. The Lord, our Father, the child's true Father, who never afflicts us unnecessarily, takes our children from us only in order that they may live forever. What God does is well done. Even before we have buried the body, the deceased has fully acknowledged that everything which God does with us, in life or in death, even that which we consider the saddest, is well done.

It is the Lord, let Him do as seemeth Him good! Sometimes we hear Christians repeating these words, and

meaning by them simply: What can I do? It is of no avail to complain; I must be resigned. But Eli puts a different meaning into these words. They express his submission to God's will, not only as inevitable, but as the best. It is possible for Christian parents to pray that the cup may pass from them, and yet to have the resignation of Eli in their hearts: I will submit to the Lord, not my will, but thine be done.

Eli, however, recognizes not only that he ought to submit, but rather that he should humbly bow before the Lord, saying: He does too much for me! Christian friends, if the Lord sends you a cross to bear, do not ask, How have I deserved it? The spirit of God will teach you to understand the significance of the word, deserving. Let us rather learn the resignation of Eli, that we may say: It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good. Amen.

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## VII.

### A LITTLE GIRL.

Genesis 42: 36.

Twenty-one weeks ago we stood at this same place, and from the same house we buried the mother, at whose side we are now about to place her only daughter. Unspeakable sorrow fills the heart of the husband; for the Lord has taken from him the only token of love which his dear wife left him. Like the patriarch Jacob, he says today: All things are against me. These words are

first of all, a grievous lamentation. And who would restrain him? He is justified in mourning for the child; for it was his only child, the pledge of love from his young beloved wife. The child had grown under the most tender care, watched over and loved as by her own mother. The first trying years had passed, when all at once a treacherous children's disease attacked her, and she fell a prey to death. Is it really true? Has the child become a prey of death? Was it true that Jacob had lost his children, when he burst forth into lamentations? No! they were living; his son, Joseph, whom he had so long mourned, lived, and was not a servant, but a lord over the whole land of Egypt; he was alive, happy and prosperous through the kindness and grace of his God. Nor was his son, Simeon, dead, as Jacob thought, and complained; on the contrary, Simeon also was alive and was with Joseph, enjoying his brother's care and kindness. And how is it with this child? Has it fallen a prey to death? We say with full assurance: No! For we Christians know at the graves of our loved ones, where they are. They are not in a country of which we have no knowledge, or of whose Ruler we know nothing;—for He who reigns in the heavenly realm is Jesus, our Brother, who for our own sakes, endured affliction and passed through the valley of the shadow of death, but who now reigns in eternal glory, truth, and love. Therefore, lamentations should not be the only sounds which are heard by this grave today, but rather these words of blessed joy: "None of those who have departed in the faith have become victims of death." For our Bro-

ther, Jesus, the heavenly Joseph, has called them unto Himself, to preserve their lives forever. And as Joseph gladdened the hearts of his brothers, and drew his old father to his heart, so Christ also will take us unto Himself into His realm of glory. He now takes from us the pledge of love, just as Joseph demanded the pledge of love, his youngest brother, Benjamin; but He takes in order to give, to preserve for eternal glory and blessedness. Amen.

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VIII.

A LITTLE GIRL.

Psalm 16: 6.

Be not surprised, dear parents, brothers and sisters, that in this hour I invite your attention to a passage of Scripture which apparently is altogether inappropriate. The lines are fallen unto you in pleasant places. Are they not rather fallen into sorrowful places? You have a goodly heritage? Do you not rather mourn a sad loss? Before you lies your child, your sister, in a casket. She is no more yours, the sweet girl, the joy of your soul, the child with the bright, happy eyes, the sweet disposition. Like a beautiful flower, you saw her growing and developing, and you cherished great hopes for the future. Now the flower is withered, your hopes are blasted. Ah, how empty and desolate your house has become, since you no longer hear the dear voice of the child, and no more behold her harmless pleasures. How bitter it

is, to give up a child at an age when it has done no conscious wrong, when it is the greatest joy of the parents! We can well understand that your eyes should be filled with tears. We sympathize and mourn with you. And yet I cling to my passage of Scripture; for it is nevertheless true, if we only take a correct point of view.

When you think of yourselves, the passage seems, indeed, unreasonable and wrong. But when you consider your child, does it not have a different significance? Can you not hear her voice saying to you: The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage? Where is your child? You answer, weeping: She is dead! Say not so, but rather: She is at home. How comforting is such a thought; it is a balm for the burning wound of the heart.

She is at home! What a goodly heritage! Surely, her soul must have been pleasing to God; for He hastened to take her out of this wicked world unto Himself, while she still wore the white baptismal robe of grace, before it became soiled by dark stains, before sin gained dominion over her; before she realized all the suffering, pain and sorrow of this world. How beautiful a death like this! When Dr. Martin Luther was saying farewell to his little daughter, and his heart was almost breaking, he at last found strength and comfort in the thought that the lines were fallen unto her in pleasant places, and he said: "Dear Lena, how fortunate you have been! Ah, had I a death like this, I would accept it this minute and sacrifice all the honor which I now have or shall yet gain."



You weep, beloved,—for whom? For your child? Why weep for her? Should you not rather envy her? Confess it openly, you weep for yourselves; you are sad, because you had to part with her, because you had to say farewell. We must be careful with our sorrow, and not allow selfishness to enter. Look away from yourselves to your child; think not of your loss, but of her gain; then you will cease mourning and will rejoice with them that do rejoice.

But your joy will become perfect, when the heritage of your child has become yours, when you have trodden the pathway which will reunite you with those who have gone before. If you seek earnestly to gain the kingdom of God, then your loss will have become gain even now, and will become still greater gain in eternity. Amen.

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IX.

A LITTLE GIRL.

Jer. 31: 3.

A sad occasion has summoned us together to this place, dearly beloved. The Lord has called from this world the youngest child of this family, the joy and life of her parents and the older brothers and sisters. It is true, her death was expected by many, but the heart of the parents hoped to the end that she would recover, and that their darling would be preserved unto them. And now, how differently it has ended! A few days ago she played happily, as children do, and then suddenly,

unexpectedly, she lay in her little bed calm, rigid, cold. Ah, we understand your sorrow, dearly beloved; we mourn with you. We all, especially those among us to whom God has given children, know how they become a part of ourselves, and how the heart bleeds, when we must place a beloved child into the casket, to bury it in the cold grave. Such a farewell would be sad, indeed, if we were not Christians, who have a Father in heaven, and a Saviour who said: "I am the resurrection and the life." The faithful God is especially near unto us in such hours as these, through which you are now passing. Even now He is in our midst and strengthens us through the healing balm of His Word. Yea, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee"; thus He spoke once to the Israelites, and thus He speaks now to your departed child. Look back over her short life. Are not these words true? What a happy childhood the Lord gave to your daughter, under the care of faithful parents and surrounded by love? How many pleasant hours she spent! And more than this. God received her as His own in holy baptism: the Saviour pressed her to His heart and promised her: Thou art mine and no one shall pluck thee out of mine hand. Yea, God loved the child with an everlasting love, and drew her with loving kindness. It was He; for He calls the children of men. He has done it with loving-kindness. If the parents and relatives loved the child, the merciful Father loved her more. Now she is with Him, saved by Him forever. Parents try to care for their little ones. They watch over them, and endeavor

to preserve them from all danger of body and soul. But the strong arm of God reaches much farther than the arm of an earthly father or mother. He hold His hands over the child, that she may be kept forever. It is a great comfort for us at the graves of our children to have the firm assurance that they are in the hands of God. Before she learned the terrible power of sin in the world, before temptations approached her heart, the Lord called her and drew her with loving kindness, to preserve her for His day. You can, therefore, find comfort in these words:

In this world of care and pain  
Lord, Thou wouldst no longer leave her  
To the sunny, heavenly plain  
Dost Thou now in joy receive her.  
Clothed in robes of spotless white  
Now she dwells with Thee in light.

She dwells with God in light! May this be your consolation, beloved. True, you will often think of your departed daughter and sister. At such times remember, that she is with the Lord, resting in His peace. And then may the Lord awaken in your hearts a longing for the heavenly things which are above. May He teach us all to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, and that while there is yet time, we may find refuge in His grace, accept Him with simple faith, become children of our Father in heaven, and brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we are enabled triumphantly to exclaim: Death is swallowed up in victory. Amen.

X.

TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY.

Psalm 16: 6.

A very great sorrow and affliction brings us together at this hour. Parents are called upon to commit their only son, and at the same time their only child to the grave. He was an unusually good child, never causing his parents solicitude or anxiety by arrogant misconduct or errors; a child, rather, who gladdened the hearts by his excellent gifts, his mental faculties, and especially by his good character, his faithfulness, his modesty, his filial love, his soul open for the influence of the divine word and spirit; a child to whose future they could look forward without anxiety and with the highest expectations. The loss of such a child—after the parents had done everything in their power to check the disease—is for them and the grandparents, a severe affliction. But hearken, beloved, thus it is written by Him whose hand has afflicted you: “He maketh sore and bindeth up, He woundeth and His hands make whole. The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. For the Lord will not cast off forever, for though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.” These words are written also for you. He will have compassion on you and offer unto you words of great comfort. Such consolation He presents to you in the words of the Psalmist which you have heard: “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places,

yea I have a goodly heritage.” It is king David, who triumphs and exults thus, while considering all the blessings which the Lord has bestowed upon him. And these words, which were of king David, have a much higher and a more beautiful significance when applied to your child. The lines are fallen unto him in pleasant places. He has gained a rich, yea, the richest heritage. Happiness and bliss are now his own. Now he lives yonder where there is no sorrow, no temptation. He is in the care and keeping of the good shepherd, the best and truest friend of children. To know and to be able to say this, is a blessed consolation indeed, for the afflicted heart, a comfort, which will heal even a wound like yours. True parents are more deeply concerned for the happiness of their children than for their own. Your happiness has been almost destroyed by the separation from your child. Much joy is taken from your life through his death. But your child has lost or suffered nothing, but rather gained everything! Bear this in mind; then you will praise and glorify God in spite of your affliction. What God does, is well done.—But behold, in taking your child away from the temptations of this evil world, and from the many afflictions of life, by an early death, God not only has thoughts of peace towards him. No, it is God’s will, that you also should receive blessing through the death of your child, and that his departure to the habitations of eternal bliss should be a source of eternal joy for you. He would have it be said of you after your death: “The lines are fallen unto them in pleasant places, yea, they have a goodly heritage.” He desires that your

death also should not be eternal loss.—Surely this is your own desire.

Do we not all desire it? That we may not be lost, but through death enter into eternal life, this is the reason why God sends us affliction. All suffering sent by God is a rope of love, which He throws out to us that He may draw us unto Himself, bind us closer to Him, and makes us more faithful in His service so that even here He may give us more and more the peace and the joy of His kingdom, and some day may take us into His eternal realm, the realm of perfect joy and bliss. Thus, beloved, God the Lord, will give you peace, though He may send you affliction at present. May this suffering bind you more closely to Him, that you may listen to His Word and precepts. Then some day it will be said of you also: The lines are fallen unto them in pleasant places, yea they have a goodly heritage. Amen.

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## XI.

### A GIRL.

Mark 5: 22-24, 35-42.

At last that which we feared for a long time has come to pass; the sweet girl, the pride and delight of her parents, the favorite of her instructors, the joy of all her friends and acquaintances, has fallen a victim to the treacherous disease which goes from house to house like an angel of wrath. Swaying between fear and hope, the parents watched day and night by her bedside, pray-



ing that the power of God and the skill of the physician might save her life after all. But God's will was not theirs. Again they have had to tread the painful road leading to the harvest field of death to which they had already brought their sixth child. All that human compassion and sympathy can offer, has been abundantly received during these days by the bereaved ones. But it has not been sufficient to calm the sorrow and wipe away the tears. Sorrow can be calmed and tears wiped away only by looking with faith into the Word of God. And this we will now proceed to do. Let us consider the death and resurrection recorded in the story of the daughter of Jairus, particularly those words in it which should fall like balm into your bleeding hearts, and fill them with divine comfort.

“Be not afraid, only believe;” thus we read. Ah, who is not afraid in these days of sickness, when the life of one of our loved ones is in danger? Who is not afraid by a death-bed, when the hand of the Lord is resting heavily upon us? Who does not feel then that death is a punishment, of which we read: For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled? And further, are you not afraid of the future, of the return into your desolate home, of the evenings, no longer made pleasant by the sweet presence of your child, of the return to sad anniversaries, on which your wounds will be opened again? Yes, there is sufficient ground for fear at a death-bed, at a grave. But, “Be not afraid, only believe.” Thus the Lord says to the anxious, afflicted father Jairus. Today He speaks the same words to you.

And happy are we that we have this assurance! The same Jesus who lived then, is living today; He will be with His people always, even unto the end of the world. Only believe that He still holds the sceptre to-day, that He kindly stretches out His arm toward His children, and exclaims: "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not!" Only believe firmly that it is He who has taken your child from you. How should He, the friend of children, mean harm to her or to you? Only believe. Cling to your Saviour with so much the firmer faith, then you will really feel that our faith is the victory that overcometh the world. For:

"The child is not dead, but sleepeth." In the house of Jairus the people laughed the Lord to scorn when He spoke these words; and even to-day we find people who say: Dead is dead. He who has died once, cannot be restored to life again. I think Jesus knows better than the shortsighted unbelieving mind of man. He calls death a sleep; but where there is sleep there is also an awakening. Happy are we that we can sing:

Asleep in Jesus, oh how sweet  
To be for such a slumber meet;  
With holy confidence to sing,  
That death has lost his venomed sting.

Dead, lifeless, are only the mortal remains, which we commit to the ground; but the better portion, the soul of this child, is living, living in the land of joy and delight, in the arms, the bosom of her Saviour, in the blessed Paradise.

Dearly beloved, this child also is not dead, but is

living. She has gone before to the heavenly home, and from there she calls to you: Follow me; that ye may also come where I am. Rejoice, for the day will come, when you shall find your child again in eternal glory. And as often as you go to the resting place of her body, remember the third word:

“Talitha kumi!” It is true, during your pilgrimage upon earth you will not see your child with your natural eyes as happy Jairus did. But some time, on that great day, when the last trumpet shall sound, the voice of the Son of God will also be heard in this grave: Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. We believe in the resurrection of the body and a life everlasting; thanks be to God that we have a Saviour who has abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He Himself, the faithful Saviour, gives unto you richly this blessed hope of a resurrection and an eternity, that you may learn more and more to honor His counsel and to say: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen.

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## XII.

### A CATECHUMEN.

Job 19:25.

How blest the righteous when he dies!

When sinks a weary soul to rest!

How mildly beam the closing eyes,

How gently heaves th' expiring breast!

Thus, in our deep sorrow, we sing of the deceased sister, whom we have accompanied to the cold grave. Gladly the parents, brothers and sisters would have had her remain here; and ah! how hard it was for them to offer this sacrifice to the Lord. And yet, when the disease became worse day after day, and hopes of recovery vanished more and more, then the sorely afflicted parents longed for their child's deliverance and regarded the approach of the last hour, and the departure of the home-sick soul of their child from this tired, mortal body, as an answer to their fervent, painful prayers. Now we surround the quiet grave, which has received the dear, pious child; now we let the soul rest in the Saviour's hand and say in faith: Till we meet again! The path of life, which the departed child traveled, was plain and straight, but, the last part especially, hard and steep. It led to God, however, and that is sufficient. Has not the name of Lydia indicated her pious disposition? Often even our name reveals our heart. Thus, through the name, given to her in holy baptism, the deceased was reminded of the pious Lydia, of whom it is written: "The Lord opened her heart, and she gave heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." Thus this girl's heart also was opened, unlocked by many a plain proof of the holiness and love of her God; for she was early taken into the school of suffering. Consequently, while attending catechetical instruction she was an attentive and thoughtful pupil, who with a deep desire for salvation and a simple faith accepted everything that was offered to her from the Word of God. At the time of her confirmation

she seemed to be feeling exceptionally well. Like a fair blossom she stood amid the other children who vowed before the throne of the Redeemer: "Lord Jesus I live unto thee and I die unto thee; therefore whether I live or die I am thine, Redeem me, O Jesus." None thought then that she should so soon prove in the last painful struggle, her confession before the altar. The verse which was given her as a motto for her life did, indeed, remind her, that while the Lord would deliver her from death and damnation, and our heart may long for deliverance, we must bear the heavy yoke of suffering. But it also showed her the true strength which does not fail when all else fails: "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

My Jesus liveth? Who is there who can separate us? I am the prince of His victory! Has not God set Him upon the throne as a Judge? He protects His people. Whoever embraces Him shall never fail. My Jesus liveth! Bearing these victorious weapons she undertook boldly the hard battle. Anxiously the sorely afflicted parents, brothers and sisters saw her taken to the hospital. Seriously ill she lay in her little bed in the well-lighted rooms. But, though she was thankful for the care and love she received, she longed for her father, her mother, her loving brothers and sisters; and her homesickness made her worse than she had been before. And not until her parents were led into the sick chamber, did she regain her cheerfulness. For a time it seemed then as though she would recover. God's ways, however, are not our ways. But why should I picture to you all the pain which the poor child endured during her long

illness? It is not best, beloved, to open the wounds again and again. We will rather remember the blessings which God vouchsafed to the departed even in her most trying hours. It was the thought of a kind teacher, whose classes she attended before her confirmation, which especially gladdened her heart. And when this true friend told her of the blessedness of a perfect life in heaven, and how the Lord changed death into a sleep, then all fear of dying departed from her heart. Gladly she received the Lord's supper, for she knew that in, with, and under the bread and wine the Lord Himself would enter into her heart and give her peace. During the last days she comforted her relatives and entreated them not to weep, for she died gladly. After long, sad hours, death came to her relief just as the first rays of sun shone into the window. And now her soul is at home in the hands of God, where no sorrow shall afflict her. If you, beloved, gaze into the dark grave and think that your treasure has been taken away from you, then may this word of cheer resound within your heart: "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Our Lord will wake her on His day. Meanwhile we must find comfort in the faith of a Job. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." He who has overcome death for us, will lead us and all our loved ones through death to life. May all the children who knew and loved the departed, and who will often miss her, always remember this dear child of God. Though she was young in years, she was a disciple of the Lord. May we all attend upon His instructions and receive from Him a pure clean heart, that He may receive us



also into His Kingdom. And may you, dear parents, even while you weep, find comfort in the beautiful words of the hymn:

Though to-day we're filled with mourning  
Mercy still is on the throne;  
With Thy smiles of love returning  
We can sing—Thy will be done.          Amen.

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### XIII.

#### A DAUGHTER OF A MINISTER.

##### Philemon 15.

A youthful life, which had almost reached the stepping stone leading from happy childhood to maturity with its frequent trouble, has been taken away from this world; a tender human blossom has been chilled by the cold breath of death; a sheath ripened for eternity in the heat of tribulation and affliction, is cut down, withered and fallen. Our sorrow is not the first sacrifice, which the Lord in his providence demanded from the deeply afflicted parents. To change one's house three times within about two years into a place of mourning, to part from those whom we love, and who formed a large part of the hopes of our life, is a sad task, a painful trial. Surely it would be almost impossible for us to submit, if we did not at the same time receive comfort from Him who has no thoughts of evil but only of peace toward us, whether He gives or takes. He had thoughts of peace towards this early deceased child;

He also reveals thoughts of peace toward you when He says to you in this sad hour, "For perhaps she therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive her forever."

Yes, this tender child is taken from us, snatched away from our midst. She will no more walk among us, she will no more gladden our hearts by the tokens of her love and filial devotion. Though it may be hard to part from her, we must gratefully confess, albeit with tears, that the Lord has considered and done all things well. The life of the departed child was full of trouble; for the greater part of her brief pilgrimage was darkened by suffering and painful sickness. Human skill availed nothing; it could not heal her disease. Man could only comfort, but not save; only alleviate her pain, but not remove it. During the last year not even this much could be done for her; it was a year of gradual decline. Now the dear sorely-tried child is delivered from all physical affliction, and set free from all sorrow of the soul. She has rest and peace. God has wiped away her tears forever. And now, if the parents and relatives will consider in this hour, how they suffered with the child, how she would have remained a child of sorrow, even if the Lord had spared her life; if they will remember, that now she rests peacefully, safely in her little casket, and no suffering or pain shall any more afflict her, that she shall be preserved from all hardships; then the tears will flow more gently, and the sorrow caused by her departure will be soothed. Then we shall thank the Lord, that He is the help of our complaisance. And

if we consider, finally, that this child has remained a child of God to the last; if we do not forget that she went home, having faith in the heritage of the children of God; then we know, also, that the Lord had only thoughts of peace toward her and toward us, when He took her into the eternal, heavenly home.

The separation from your child is only temporal. The heritage which she has obtained is promised to us also; the goal which she has reached beckons to us also. Who knows how soon we shall reach the end of our pilgrimage. It is all-important that we should ever keep in view the goal of our heavenly calling in Jesus, and guide our steps toward it. God has taken this child from the sadly afflicted parents, that they might receive it again for all eternity. The “perhaps” in the words of the apostle becomes a blessed certainty for them, if the departure of their child unites them still more closely with God and their heavenly home, and strengthens their faith in the living Christ. This faith they will prove if they bear their cross in filial humility and patience, following Him who bore the cross before them, and who demands of His disciples that they should in this respect also walk in His steps. This faith they will prove if they extend their love so much the more to the children which the Lord has left them; this faith they will prove, if they not only give to the flock entrusted to their care an example of external and internal submission to the will of God, but also, as good shepherds, find more room for love of their flock, the smaller their own family circle becomes. This faith they will prove, if they come forth

from this severe trial purified, as those who, whenever they think of their deceased child, can find consolation in the blessed assurance: “Our child has therefore departed from us for a season, that we should receive her forever.” Amen.

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#### XIV.

#### A STUDENT.

Psalm 40 : 28-31.

Beloved in the Lord! we hear the prophet speak of the power and glory of the eternal God, of the frailty and infirmity of life, and of the strong power of God by which His strength is made perfect in weakness. The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary. He is the same, and His years and power shall have no end. Great is our Lord and of great power; His understanding is infinite. How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been His counselor? And what is man but dust! A falling leaf! All flesh is as grass. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth. Human life is dust, even when we believe its vitality to be strongest. Even the strength of youth can be broken by the hand of death; the flower of manhood withers when touched by his chilly breath. “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall,” says the

prophet. Yet he adds these comforting words: “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.” It is this power, the strong power of God, which gives to the weak and the weary vigor and strength to pass through struggle, strife and suffering, through darkness, and difficulty, to victory, to light, to life eternal.

We have been led to-day from a place of mourning to this grave, where the word of the prophet is fulfilled: “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.” Seven years ago we took a tired boy from this very place to his last rest; and now the mourning parents have again been pressed down by the heavy hand of Providence; they behold a beloved child, a promising young man, fall a prey to death. Healthful, cheerful in the strength of youth, he returned to college from a visit home, only to be brought back a dying youth, and to sink into the grave after a severe, protracted illness. Those who saw him during his severe suffering, saw how tired and feeble he was, how he became weaker and weaker, how his suffering increased, how his struggles grew more severe, and his strength became more and more exhausted. And the parents and loved ones who were around him, who even now must bear the grief of his loss, and who day and night surrounded his dying couch, have also experienced during these long hours what it means to faint and be weary, and to have grief and sorrow clutching at the heart.

But you, beloved, have also experienced the truth of the other words of the prophet during this weary, anxious time: "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." When the hand of the Lord rested heavily upon you, then was He also nigh unto you and your house with His strength and power. He has borne and supported you, so that you experienced the truth of the words: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." And this severely tried youth, also the son so dear to you, experienced during his long tribulation, that they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. Meekly, kindly, and gently as he went through life, he also bore his cross in the strength of the Lord, who always endowed him with new strength for each struggle, with new patience for each affliction, and finally, with patient submission, to the counsel and will of his heavenly Father, whose thoughts, as another prophet says, are always thoughts of peace and not of evil. Thus the deceased fought a hard fight in the strength of the Lord, but also, we hope, a good fight. On the day that commemorates the ascension of our Lord and Saviour, at the hour when the congregation in the house of the Lord was singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the exalted One, the Saviour loosed this soul from the fetters of the mortal body, that, like its Saviour's, it might ascend upward to the heavenly Jerusalem, which is built on high, where there shall be no more sorrow, nor weeping, nor pain,



but fullness of joy, and at His right hand, pleasures forevermore.

Therefore we praise Thee, eternal Father, unsearchable God, even for that which thou hast done here. We submit ourselves sadly, yet humbly, unto Thy wise and loving hand at the grave of this prematurely deceased young man. O God of all comfort and mercy! Give, we pray Thee, Thy divine comfort to the hearts which now mourn over the loss of this promising, obedient son, our dear brother and friend. And as Thou hast been with them in all their afflictions hitherto, and hast given power to the faint, and strength to them who have no might, wilt Thou not now be with them in this sorrow and tribulation, O God of might and power, and renew their strength that they may run and be not weary, and walk and not faint? And thou, beloved brother:

Sleep in Jesus; blessed sleep,  
From which none ever wakes to weep;  
A calm and undisturbed repose,  
Unbroken by the last of foes.                      Amen.

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XV.

A GIRL, SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE.

Luke 8:48.

O Lord, how unsearchable are Thy ways, and how dark are they! Not a life of many years, which longed for rest, hast Thou taken; not an aged one, weary of this life, who prayed to Thee, "O Lord, redeem me," hast

Thou called unto Thee; no, none of these, but a young life hast Thou broken off, as a storm breaks a rose from its stem and scatters its petals to the wind. At this beautiful season, when the earth is radiant with its fair flowers, when spring, beautiful spring opens her doors to the young heart and tempts it with the beauty and happiness of this life, at this very season when all nature is rejoicing, we are called upon to commit to the grave this young life, just budding into womanhood, the only daughter of her widowed mother, who in the grave of her child, buries much joy and hope. Our hearts go out to her in sympathy, our tears mingle with hers; but thanks be to God, there is comfort for us in this sad hour, if we will look to Him, who alone can give us the comfort we crave, and who, in His infinite mercy, sends us no cross heavier than we can bear.

He, the loving Saviour, who in holy baptism pressed this young life to his heart; He the good shepherd, who on the day of her confirmation laid his hand on her and blessed her; He, the Prince of Peace and source of life, to-day stands here, places His hand on her and says unto her: Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. Then He turns to the sorrowing mother, and to all of you who mourn, and speaks these comforting words: Peace be with you.

During the weary days and nights of suffering, the deceased's patience and faith in God were sorely tried. But again we saw the truth of God's word verified. When the Lord imposes a burden upon us, He gives us strength to bear it: Her faith supported her. The Lord

was with her, and said: “My daughter, be of good comfort. Do you not see me? Do you not recognize me? It is I, and I will not leave you. I, your shepherd, who from your childhood have fed and led you; your Saviour whom you chose as your guide, when, in a sacred and solemn hour of your life, you promised, ‘O Jesus I live for Thee and die for Thee. In life or in death I will be Thine. O take me to Thee, Jesus.’ The time is now here for you to redeem your promise. Prove now that you are my disciple, and that you will be my disciple in sorrow and in death, and I will give you a crown of life.”

She did believe, and her faith gave her strength to bear the cross of Jesus and willingly to forsake this beautiful earth. Though she walked in the valley of the shadow of death, she feared no evil. Though she suffered much pain in her last hours, she went home peacefully; for she well knew that Jesus receives sinners, and would receive her also. He who dies thus, dies well.

Be comforted, my daughter; so says the Heavenly Comforter to you, heartbroken mother. Your faith, faith in the omniscient God, who has thoughts of love toward you even in this hour, alone can console you.

A cemetery, a sleeping-chamber, we call the plot of ground where your dear child will be laid. There in peace she will sleep, freed from earth's sorrows and cares. The flowers will soon blossom over her grave, not only to tell us that a lovely flower, cut down in the spring-time of her life, is sleeping beneath them, but to be an emblem of the incorruptible, a never-fading heri-

tage that awaits us in Heaven, where in God's garden there will be no withering or dying. Sorrowing mother, is not this balm for your bleeding heart? Your child has departed from earth in peace and is now at Home with her Saviour. Her faith hath made her whole, hath supported her through all her struggles, and hath given her peace everlasting. Then, be thou comforted, and go in peace.—Amen.

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## XVI.

A YOUNG LADY, TWENTY-TWO YEARS OF AGE.

Isaiah 58: 8-9.

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” These words of God, found in the book of the prophecy of Isaiah, were addressed to the people of Israel, who during a long period of captivity had begun to doubt the precious promises of God, because He had not led them according to their expectations. To-day these words comfort the despairing and strengthen their confidence in the Almighty, who in due season will fulfill His promises, and give to His people the promised reward.

But this passage of Scripture, which praises the height of the divine thoughts and ways, was also spoken to our beloved sister nine years ago when, on the day of her confirmation, she stood in our church before the

altar of the Lord. And even while you are mourning, beloved, you see the fulfillment of these words in the life and early death of the departed. Had your hopes and wishes been fulfilled, her life would not have been taken so suddenly. You thought that your obedient and pious daughter would receive the promise of the fourth Commandment, and live long in the land which the Lord God had given her. But she was afflicted instead with disease for a long time; and while you and her companions performed your daily tasks, she lay on a bed of sickness; and while your eyes were closed at night in peaceful sleep, she tossed on her bed, tormented by pain; and while you hoped that her youthful strength might gain the victory over the treacherous disease, she became more and more feeble, until at least she herself longed for relief from her sufferings by death.

But though you loved her with your whole heart, the Heavenly Father loved your child still more. For His ways and thoughts are divine, and therefore higher than our human ways and thoughts. In the light of faith in God's fatherly goodness and wisdom, you will recognize the thoughts which He has had toward her as thoughts of peace and not of evil. You will willingly follow the dark path through which He has led you; for it will end in light.

Her body was afflicted with this terrible pain in order that her soul might be brought nearer to the Lord and healed through Him. The sick-chamber became her world, that she might not lose herself and her God in the world without. The departure from her loved ones

was a trying ordeal for her, but her faith, strengthened through her severe affliction, lightened her death. She went home, firmly believing that she would go into the land of promise, where God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of the redeemed; where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain. And as she has now reached the goal for which she was destined through the grace of God, should you not gratefully praise the ways and the thoughts of God, because they are higher than yours.

In conclusion, I wish to speak a few words to her companions, who have come to pay her a last tribute of love. Trusting in your youthful strength, you expect to continue on the path of life for many years; but you do not know how soon you will reach the end of your life. This one thing, however, you know, and of this I wish to remind you, that your path of life will end in the city of peace only, if you allow God's ways to be your ways and accept His commandments as the rule for your daily life. Therefore, let us seek the Lord, while he may be found; let us call on Him while He is near, that the thoughts of peace and salvation which He has toward us may be ours throughout eternity. Amen.



## XVII

### A BELIEVING YOUNG MAN.

Genesis 24: 5-6.

Though the departure of a true and noble life from this world does, indeed, inflict pain and sorrow upon loving ones, yet the death of a child of God, redeemed through the Saviour, should give to the Christian a great and holy joy. Those who were intimately acquainted with the deceased, naturally loved him. For he possessed a pure soul; he disliked the use of profane language, and led a deep, earnest, inner-life. We are, therefore, justified in our mourning. Yea, beloved parents, brothers and sisters, what a great treasure you are called upon to sacrifice at this place in giving up the grateful and hopeful son, the affectionate and sympathetic brother. Well may you weep. And yet, if there is divine truth in the firm hope of faith which transformed his death into a blissful life, then even our mourning for the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." It is true, according to your opinion, the Lord has taken your son and brother from this temporal life too soon. It was hard indeed for him to submit to the will of God when he considered his youth, his profession which he loved enthusiastically, and the grief of his loved ones, with whom he was associated and related through deep spiritual bond of faith. But the Spirit of the Lord during his hours of affliction awakened and quickened in his heart a desire for the home above, a yearning to leave this life for a higher one. So that thoughts of an earthly

home finally disappeared entirely, and the Lord filled his whole soul, the Lord who, he firmly believed, had prepared him a home in heaven through the grace of the Redeemer. "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my Master." Yes, we willingly send him, hoping, praying, because the Lord has called him. No, we will not hinder him, but rather follow him. We will not merely follow his remains to the grave, but having been closely united with him in Christian love, we will follow. For this separation is merely a new bond of love for those who are left behind; it is only a temporary separation. Christian love shall never cease. It only waits for its completion in heavenly and eternal communion with the Lord—a completion made possible by this earthly separation.—Amen.

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### XVIII.

#### A YOUNG MAN WHO SUFFERED MUCH.

Proverbs 16: 32.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." These words were given to the youthful sufferer, who at so early an age was called to his eternal rest, as a watchword on the day of his confirmation, perhaps because the Lord wished to show him that through much suffering and tribulation he must enter into the kingdom of God. Even as a child he could not enjoy the pleasures of child-

hood; but the Lord endowed him with extraordinary mental and spiritual powers, as a compensation for his physical constitution, and drew him unto himself with lovingkindness. It was the desire of his heart to enter the ministry, and he seemed especially adapted for this calling by his talents and piety. But his Heavenly Father had chosen a different calling for him; he was to proclaim the name of his Lord by suffering, and preach the grace of God in Christ Jesus by patience and endurance. True, his parents did everything in their power to restore their child to health and strength. But though the physician could temporarily relieve his suffering, the Heavenly Physician wished to make him perfect through suffering and to present him to his loved ones as one whose soul has been healed and who has become an example to the sick and to the healthy of that which a child of God can suffer, endure and bear through the power of Christ. Thus the frail young man became a king through suffering, and attained to a spiritual height which is rarely found among mortal men. His sick-chamber became a holy place, where relatives and friends could learn the truth of Paul's words: "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed." In his sick-chamber the family affairs were considered; here it was that the family prayed and took the Lord's Supper. The strength of the sufferer declined rapidly, but while the outward man failed more and more, and his body became weaker, the inner man grew from day to day and his spiritual power developed. After a hard winter, which brought

much physical suffering, the eternal spring came. After a few dark weeks, during which he drank the dregs of suffering, the spirit broke the fetters of earth and took its flight to the heavenly home where weakness shall be found no more.

At the time when his companions enlisted and swore allegiance to their country to serve their king in peace and war, and if necessary, to “take cities,” his heavenly King called him to follow His banner, and to enroll his name in the heavenly army of the Lord. There the watchword of the departed will be fulfilled; he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. Amen.

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## XIX.

### A WORLDLY YOUNG MAN WHO DIED SUDDENLY

Luke 12: 39, 40.

These are solemn words of warning and exhortation. We often hear the voice of God speaking in his holy word: “Watch and pray,” or “Watch and be sober,” or, as in our text, “Be ye therefore also ready.” In these warning voices we recognize the true friend of our souls, who has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but says: “Wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.” Yet, alas, how often is not this warning unheeded! And who disregard the divine warning more easily than young people?

Since so many will not hear, we are obliged today to behold the folly of disregarding His warning voice. How

necessary, how true, how kind His warning is! For if the truth, that we ought to be ready at any moment to appear before God, had been present to the mind of this young man; if he had remembered that he must master himself and never let the reins of restraint slip from his hands, this calamity would surely not have occurred. Alas, that he ran into destruction with closed eyes! Alas, that he inflicted this misery upon his loved ones! Alas, that now the hopes for the realization of which they have been working and striving for many years, have been blasted and destroyed.

A healthy young man, the only son of the family, the hope and support of his father,—what is he now? Dust and ashes! The roses of youth, the laughter of mirth—covered by darkness and horror!

And how terrible the transition! A few short hours ago, rejoicing and cheering, surrounded by the roaring of mirth, making merry with his companions,—and now silent in death's cold embrace!

Look this way, you, his companions, who have drunken, laughed, and made merry with him. If you could have foreseen this, you would have been stricken dumb, and the heart in your bosom would have trembled with fear and terror. Now that the dreadful news has been brought, that your friend met his death by a fall, have not some of you become serious? The question suggests itself: Has your behaviour and conduct been good and commendable? Ask yourselves while you stand by this casket: "Is our continual hilarity leading us the right way?" You have never believed till now that life is

serious. Now God has told you in blasting words. The dull sound, heard when the body of the deceased struck the ground, means: Enough, enough. You could not always revel and make merry. Life is earnest and full of responsibilities. Remember the end!

Beloved, it is not wholesome for a man to play every day of his life on the instrument of joy, thus wilfully driving away all serious thoughts. Such conduct makes it necessary for God to open your eyes. Look here; a broken skull, laying bare the brain and bloody tissue; a youthful face—the pale lips sang just a short time ago: Dawn of morn, how swiftly, ah, how suddenly, may death be here and life be gone;” and now the morning sun shines on his pale countenance.—Ah, how foolish you are, taking life as a joke, and having only a laugh for its serious side! You need not try to find an excuse in your youth. True, the Bible says: “Rejoice, O young man in the youth,” but it also adds: “But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” Youths will become men, but youths who cannot take life earnestly, will never become stalwart men. Can it be merely accidental, that, in the short space of two weeks, two young men have been snatched away from our number in such a dreadful manner, one while at work, the other in the midst of his carousals? Whoever cannot see the hand of God in this, is beyond help! The finger of God is raised in warning, but it is a kind warning. Turn ye to me, saith the Lord, in the time when I may be found.—Yes, there is an eternity! Perhaps you do not believe in an eternity; but you will soon find out that after death



comes judgment; and how can you stand at the bar of God, if you do not watch, and the day of the Lord comes suddenly like a thief in the night, as it has come for the deceased.

Beloved, every one of us has the deepest sympathy for the sorely afflicted relatives. How we would like to comfort them in their deep distress! But we know, that even sorrow has its sacred rights, and that human words are of no avail. How different it is, when we, or rather when the Lord Jesus Christ, can say to the afflicted soul: Weep not! Therefore we would direct your wounded hearts to the compassionate and merciful Comforter. We would have you believe that this affliction comes from the Lord. With it He has come to your home, never to leave it again, but to remain with you forever. Our affliction should bring us to the Lord. Weep on the Saviour's breast in your quiet closet. Pray to Him those that are afflicted and not yet lost, as those that weep and yet seek comfort and find it. Accustom your minds to recognizing everything He sends as good and salutary. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him! The bloody night of the ....th will bear fruit for you, beneficial and salutary for time and eternity. Amen.

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XX.

A YOUNG HUSBAND KILLED BY A FALLING  
TREE.

Amos 3:6.

Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it? Beloved in the Lord, a terrible casualty has

brought us together at this grave. Without foreboding the deceased went as usual to his daily labor. While on his way home, just a few steps from his house, death suddenly struck him down, taking him away in an instant. What a calamity! This is the complaint of the wife who has been united with the deceased for 12 years in happy love. It seems incomprehensible, that she should become a widow so soon, so suddenly. Though the children cannot yet understand their loss, they feel one thing: A calamity has befallen us. Yes, we all deplore this death and grieve over this misfortune; and we must confess: Our life is as nothing against the power of death! But we have not assembled at this place only to mourn. We also seek light for this dark hour, and we receive light when we look up in faith to the Lord. Because this has happened by His will. He must have been the comfort of the dying, and He will also accept him through grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. If the Lord has sent this affliction, then, surely, He will look graciously at the heart of the frightened and deeply afflicted wife, the tears of the three fatherless children; then, surely, He will answer the prayers of our sympathetic love, and will comfort the afflicted in their deep distress. Therefore we say to you, beloved, in your sadness: It is the Lord, who enters your home, not only as a God whose deeds we cannot understand, but also as the Father of orphans and the Husband of widows. He is near you, to pour into your hearts the balm of His peace, yea, to change your grief into blessings.—True, by this calamity, the Lord seems also to have entered

your home with a solemn warning. It is as though He would ask us by this grave: How would you feel, would you be prepared, what would become of you, if your last hour should come so suddenly? It is, as though He would remind us powerfully and seriously: Remember the end! Prepare yourself this very day for your death by an earnest repentance and a living faith in Jesus Christ, your only Lord and Saviour; for

Who knows how near my end may be?  
Time speeds away and death comes on.  
How swiftly, oh how suddenly,  
May death be here and life be gone!  
My God, for Jesus' sake I pray  
Thy peace may bless my dying day. Amen.

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## XXI.

### A FATHER.

Psalms 146:9.

The holy evangelists tell us that once when Jesus was with his disciples on the Sea of Galilee, a raging storm arose, which tossed the weak vessel to and fro, so that destruction seemed inevitable. While the disciples, in nameless terror, almost despaired, the Saviour was lying in the ship asleep, apparently unconcerned about the raging of the storm, the roar of the billows and the fears of the disciples. Finally, driven by fear, they went to the Saviour and entreated Him: "Lord save us, we perish."

And He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. The Lord helped them.

Are not you, the sorrow-stricken widow and weeping children, in a position similar to that of the disciples? The fierce storm of affliction is raging within your bosom, shaking the very depth of your heart; the billows of grief roll over you as though they would swallow you up. Your husband and father has been snatched away by the cold hand of death. You are on the brink of despair; you fear the ship of life will break in the uproar of the storm and waves. Did it not seem to you during these painful days and weeks as if the Lord were asleep, as if He had hidden his countenance from your sorrow, and turned a deaf ear to your supplications? And yet happy are you, if the Lord is with you in your ship of life, if you put your trust in Him, and go to Him in your affliction, praying confidently: Lord save us, we perish. Then you shall experience His mighty help. He will quiet your soul, and calm the storm which is raging in your heart.

Only listen to the comforting promise of our text: The Lord relieveth the fatherless and widow. Without question your wounds will be opened anew through these words; for by them you are reminded that you have lost your husband and father; that he who lovingly worked and cared for you has departed from you. You prayed that the life of your husband might be spared; but his appointed time had come, and now you surround the grave as widows and orphans, weeping with bleeding hearts. Anxiously you look into the future and ask: "What will become of us, for we have lost our father."

But while you ask this question, do not forget the words of our Saviour: "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap or gather into barns. Yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not much better than they?" Believe and rest assured that He will be your Father, your Guide, and your Provider, for of Him the whole family in heaven and on earth is named. From Him you have received the comforting assurance: "The Lord relieveth the fatherless and widows." He who has taken your father from you, will guide and protect you, and preserve you from all danger. May the Almighty Father be your stay; for He bids you say: "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." May you find refuge in Him, help in all tribulation, comfort in all sorrow. Truly, He will not leave your confidence unrewarded. The faithful father in heaven will not forsake you; for He relieveth the fatherless and the widow. "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him; and He will bring it to pass." Amen.

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## XXII.

### A FATHER DROWNED.

Luke 22:42.

A very sad casualty has called us together at this place. In the prime of life, the man whom we are about to consign to the grave was snatched away by a dreadful sudden death. In vain the young wife and the little

children waited for the return of the husband and father. Foreboding evil, as it seems, the oldest child cried out in his sleep: Father will not return again. Slowly the night passed for the wife, harrassed by terrible thoughts. Day after day went by, but still the missing man was not seen anywhere. But, on Wednesday noon, they found his corpse in the city water works, with bloody, deformed countenance. How did the deceased meet his death? We do not know. Whether he lost his way in the darkness, or stumbled and fell into the stream, or was pushed down, or defended himself for a time against his opponents and was finally overcome,—we do not know. There remains nothing, but to commend his poor wife and children to the grace of a merciful God, and into the hands of the Redeemer. The Lord will care for His children; He will be a husband to the widow, a Father to the fatherless. He will support the poor and forsaken; He will not let them suffer from hunger or want. He will awaken friends for the afflicted mother and her children, so that they can honorably go through life. But what has become of the deceased? Did he have thoughts of eternity while walking on the path of death? Did he have any idea that this would be his last walk on earth, and did he therefore commend his soul into the hand of the Lord? We do not know. But we hope that while he was struggling with the waves and fighting his last fight, he lifted up his soul to God and prayed to Him in mercy to save his soul eternally. Perhaps he remembered the words of the dying thief: Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom. The poor man, at whose



grave we are mourning, in all probability thought first of God in his death struggle; for who, but God alone, can save us even from the horrors of hell? For dying persons this is perhaps the only comfort, that there is redeeming grace even for the poorest sinner. Yea, if the Lord forgave the dying thief; if He said to him, "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," while he was hanging on the cross,—then even the poorest sinner who has time to repent and to pray needs not give up in despair. And this may have been the only hope, the only comfort for the deceased. Perhaps he looked upon his past life with repentance and lifted up his eyes with a prayer for forgiveness; perhaps he thought with sorrow and grief of his past life and looked into the future full of faith. Perhaps one of his last sad thoughts was for his wife—but his last sigh should have ascended as a prayer to the throne of God. His last breath may have touched the heart of the Saviour as the prayer of a sinner: Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom! And behold, the Lord does not forget us. He does not resemble the courtier who, in his exalted position, forgot the mourning convict, though he had promised to remember him at the court of the king. No, our Lord is like a faithful father, who does not enjoy his wealth by himself, but calls his children that they may rejoice with him. But though a sinner like the dying thief in the hour of death may enter the gates of paradise, we must not put off our repentance until our dying hour. You must first live in Jesus, then you can die peacefully and happily in Him; this is what God would have us do. You

must remember the Lord on your way through life, if you would have Him remember you in the hour of death. We do not have the promise that God the Lord graciously remembers us only in the hour of death. No, He will remember us at all times. And in the midst of our work, in the midst of our joys, our sorrows, our troubles, we should pray: Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. May this be your prayer, beloved. You have need that God should graciously remember you, forget you not and care for you. Trust in Him, for He knows best what troubles and afflicts you in this hour: and pray to Him:

O Thou from whom all goodness flows  
I lift my soul to Thee.  
In all my sorrows, conflicts, woes,  
O Lord, remember me. Amen.

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### XXIII.

#### THE HEAD OF A FAMILY.

Prov. 28:20.

When, in view of the finished course of life of this brother, who has been called home, I asked myself the question: What has he been to us, what have we lost by his death? I could not find a more appropriate answer than that which expressed in these words of the Holy Scripture: "A faithful man shall abound with blessings."

In the first place I wish to recall to your mind, that the deceased during his life abundantly experienced the

faithfulness of God. He thankfully acknowledged this. Often before his death he humbly proclaimed the faithfulness of his Master, saying: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant. When, in the tender years of his youth, his father was taken from him and the hard work of a man rested upon his shoulders; when he was called upon to bear the heavy yoke, he truly experienced that the strength of God is made perfect in weakness. And later, during his married life, in his home and his family the faithful God graciously watched over and abundantly blessed him. And when he felt the days advancing, in which his strength began to fail, and a lingering illness brought him nearer to the end of his life, even then God extended his strong hand over him and strengthened him to fight the good fight of faith and to be patient, knowing that his Lord would lay upon him no greater burden than he was able to bear. And when even shortly before his departure he spoke these words: For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, God answered him: Go in peace, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. But we humble ourselves resignedly before the God who has redeemed him and called him home; we bless His holy name; for “A faithful man shall abound with blessings.”

These words serve as a worthy memorial for him. Nothing better can be said of a Christian, than that he was faithful—faithful to his God, and faithful to those who were entrusted to his care—and continued faithful to the end. When the Word of God says: It is required

in stewards that a man be found faithful, it is easily inferred that faithfulness adds value and significance to a human soul. No matter how variedly God has dealt out His gifts, everything depends upon our faithfulness in the calling He has entrusted to us. This faithfulness the Lord claims for himself. Faithfulness towards God is, first of all, the condition of faithfulness in every other respect, especially of that which man has to exercise toward his brethren. Only when we remain faithful toward God, will we show faithfulness toward those whom He has given us. A Christian, faithful to God, will ever be unwearily faithful in fulfilling his duties as long as it is day. And to such a one the words apply: A faithful man shall abound with blessings.”

On earth he will receive a crown of blessings and in heaven a crown of life. Because he has kept the faith, the reward will be given to him according to the promise: Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life. And this testimony we may offer here at the grave of the deceased, whom the Lord made a blessing to all of us. He kept the faith and remained steadfast to his end. Faithful he was in his word and walk, faithful in his daily life and calling, faithful as an officer in this congregation. Therefore he was blessed as a husband, blessed as a father of the four beloved children whom he leaves behind, blessed in that which he was, and in that which he accomplished. His memory shall be blessed among us. We only hope that this sense of faithfulness which marked your deceased father may never become extinct in your family. The Lord strengthen you with

His spirit, that you may never forget the good name of your father, and this may be His legacy to you: "A faithful man shall abound with blessings." Amen.

May the blessing of the Lord rest upon you, good and faithful servant, for all the piety, kindness and providing care of your dear ones, for the good example you have shown them; the congregation joins with them in recognizing thy faithfulness as a member; the Lord will reward thy faithfulness when He shall say to thee: "A faithful man shall abound with blessings." Amen.

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#### XXIV.

#### A WIFE AND MOTHER.

Phil. 2: 5.

When we consider a life which has reached its earthly goal, the question naturally arises in our mind what has been the value and import of this life? Our text plainly tells us, that the main thing is the "mind" that is in us. It does not say: "be as Christ," but; "let this mind be in you!" For the former would be impossible in the weakness of the flesh which ever and anon manifests itself. Therefore it is necessary to know the mind of man before estimating him, for it often casts a mild light upon his whole career. We often misunderstand the deeds of a person and even become offended; yet he might probably say to us: If only you knew how I mean it! A glance into my heart would change your opinion! It is even possible that there may be two different senti-

ments in man, the human and the divine; but the latter is stronger than the former, it prevails more and more, the immortal overcomes the mortal, the spirit the flesh, and the inner man is renewed every day, especially in the fire of affliction.

It is wrong for people to refuse to consider this fact and to insist on retaining their old grudges against such a person, always recalling past events, and refusing to forget or forgive. Such mean, sordid souls will fall under the condemnation of the word: "So likewise shall my heavenly father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Our deceased sister does not indeed, stand in need of either reproach or praise. Yea, she would have desired praise least of all. And yet I may say, that at her dying couch I have learned to understand the words: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." Divine grace with its renewing power has accomplished this in her.

She did not possess brilliant mental faculties. She was inclined to sadness rather than to joy, her vision was not bright and sunny. Therefore she often worried and troubled over things, which other people quickly overcome. And on account of these characteristics she may have had unpleasant experiences with some people. I wish you could have seen those eyes beaming during the last weeks. Her severe suffering had a peculiar effect; instead of increasing her sadness, it evoked gladness;



instead of increasing her vexation at men, it melted her heart. How gladly she would have become reconciled to all! For her countenance was directed toward Jerusalem. Her ear had caught divine melodies in the distance, and her heart had embraced the gentlest of all men. Jesus Christ had become her only delight. Because she loved him, she bore her cross patiently; she was not only kind and forgiving in mind but she was blessed and happy within. Ah, the lustre of her eyes! Those who could have seen it would have exclaimed: Yes, all things are become new! And whosoever denies this poor and yet happy soul her last wish for reconciliation, will have to answer for his hardness of heart.

These words are not addressed to her loved ones. They have always been kind to her and deeply mourn her death. The aged husband, who is present, cannot even follow our words. He is forced by sickness to seclude himself from the society of men. And now the only one who lovingly cared for him has passed away. Silently he must bear his suffering. Heavenly Father, what a heavy cross thou hast placed on his shoulders! Help him to bear it! The children, once united by the love of a mother, are now left each one to himself. If only they are minded as their mother was during the last week, then the faith and love of their mother will be their best inheritance. May they all be faithful, walking in love. Finally the relatives and friends. Some, we fear, will not feel the loss deeply; but others will mourn, because another soul which prayed and waited for the coming of the Lord has passed away. Such souls we need; for

if there be no praying Christians, neither will there be divine blessings.

Let us all listen to the words: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, and he that hath eyes to see, let him see! In three days we have witnessed two deaths. The one a sudden death, unexpected, unlooked for; the other prepared through a long, blessed sickness. “My God, for Jesus’sake I pray, Thy peace may bless my dying day.” Amen.

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## XXV.

### A YOUNG WIFE AND MOTHER.

I Cor. 13:8.

Our hearts bleed as we surround this casket. Unexpectedly this faithful mother has been called from her home to eternity. We can scarcely understand it; but God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways. Nevertheless it is certain that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts; He has thoughts of peace and not of evil. “His love never faileth.”

It is difficult for us to behold the love of God, when our eyes are dimmed by tears; but we can believe that God has had thoughts of peace with the departed and with all of you even in this dispensation of his providence. How great was the love, which the Lord showed the deceased during her life! How much joy she experienced in her home, how peaceful and pleasant was her life! We can rightly sound the depth of God’s love, however,

only when we remember that he made her heart susceptible to the word of God, so that she learned to love her Saviour and could peacefully go into eternity, having the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. He who dies thus dies well! Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!

But you also, beloved, will experience that God is Love even in the hour of sorrow! He has taken much; but they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He will bless this period of affliction for you, so that you shall reap spiritual, heavenly fruit; He will hold his hand over the motherless children; He will ever be near them. The pious example of the mother has been a blessing for you already, dear children. Even in heaven your mother thinks of you and prays for you. Her love for you, the husband and the children, shall never cease. She has passed away from you for a short while only. How great will be your joy, when you meet her again in eternity, for then your joy will be complete, then none will be able to separate you! The love of a mother is a drop taken from the ocean of the divine love and this faithful, unselfish, sacrificing love of a mother will be transfigured, purified, and increased in heaven; it will never cease, for it flows from the heart of God.

Neither shall your love for the departed ever fail. Her memory will be a source of blessings for you. Ah, how much she did for you, how she toiled for you, how she watched over your eternal welfare. And the love of the soul is the soul of love. Often your thoughts will

be with the departed; her admonitions will surround you like guardian angels; her grave will be a sacred place, whither you will often go to find comfort; but you will not seek the living among the dead. Ah, while we stand by the graves of our loved ones, what a revelation of God's love that through the crucified and risen Saviour we have a living faith, that His love unites our hearts, and that at this hour we can say of His strong divine love and of our weak human love: "Love never faileth!" Amen.

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XXVI.

A YOUNG WIFE.

Rev. 2:19 (R. V.)

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." The solemn truth of these words impresses itself again upon our hearts, as we stand by this grave. We are laying to rest a young wife. At the age at which others are still in the prime of life, her strength was broken. Truly, God's thoughts are not our thoughts.

No children mourn at her grave; but the parents, who behold their child preceding them to eternity, mourn so much the more, and now sadly exclaim in the words of Holy Writ: "Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low." Five brothers and sisters sur-

round her grave and bewail the loss of their loving sister. And there stands the young man, an afflicted widower, who after a few months of happiness had to part with the faithful companion of his life, though he longed to retain her. God's thoughts are not our thoughts.

What the departed sister has been to you, is, I believe, included in the words of our text: "I know thy works, and thy love, and faith, and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first." The good which she has done, the great good you have possessed in her, shall never be forgotten. You know what she has been to you, and therefore you have reason for weeping and mourning.

"I know thy love;" thus the aged father and mother can exclaim while they mourn the loss of the second oldest daughter. "I know thy love;" thus the sisters and brothers exclaim in tears, for death hath taken from them a loving sister. "I know thy love," thus the afflicted widower can exclaim, who for only a few short years was happy in her love. I know thy love," it shall never be forgotten.

"I know thy faith." She had been brought up in a Christian home, in which faith and the word of God are still held in high esteem. This spirit of her home had been imbibed by her; and it certainly is a beautiful memorial, that all her loved ones can say of her: "I know thy faith."

"I know thy ministry." While she was single, she served the mourning parents. After she had been united to her husband in holy matrimony she served him. She

was his faithful companion in business and at home, so faithful, that in spite of her poor health she did everything in her power. The words of the Bible are applicable to her: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil."

"I know thy patience and that thy last works are more than the first." For several years, and especially during the last three years, the deceased has been ailing, and at last her suffering was great. But she bore patiently the cross which the Lord placed on her shoulders; and the heavier the cross grew, the more patient she became. And it can well be said with regard to her patience: "Thy last works were more than the first." When therefore we declare at her grave: "I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first," the words are true of her.

On the one hand such a beautiful life increases the sadness, but it offers also a great consolation. It is easier to find comfort in the hour of sorrow if we know that the departed died in faith, than if we cannot have that assurance. The best consolation is found in the hope of the Christian. We know that the Lord has received the departed unto his own. We find comfort in the beautiful hope, that the Lord himself will say the words of praise to the glorified soul: "I know thy works, and love and faith and ministry and patience and that thy last works are more than the first."

Now your hearts are sad and sorrowful, beloved. But through faith in Christ, your helper and comforter,

you will at last be able to say: “Behold for peace I had great bitterness, but thou hast in love to my soul delivered me from the pit of corruption. It was Thy will; blessed be Thy holy name.” Amen.

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## XXVII.

### A CHRISTIAN WIFE AND MOTHER.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.  
Ps. 116:15.

Beloved in the Lord! This departed sister was one of those whom God calls his saints, and she was one who knew herself to be one of his saints.

But, I hear you say, is it not arrogant pride and audacious self glorying, to count oneself among the saints of God? Not at all, is my reply, if we take the term in the meaning which God’s word gives to it, and as our church interprets it, the meaning sense in which this departed believed was wont to understand it. We all are saints of God, if we gratefully and humbly recognize, accept and hold fast that which the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, has granted to us in the sacrament of holy baptism. They are saints to whom, though they are born in sin and begotten of a sinful seed, God has forgiven all their sins, and has applied to them the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We are saints if from all stains of the flesh and spirit with which our lives are affected, we have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanseth from all sin. We are saints



if we have received the Holy Ghost, whom God gives to all that penitently confess their sins and believingly accept Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners. Such souls receive the Spirit of adoption whereby they cry, "Abba, Father," and such, being perfected more and more, and enabled to live lives that are conformed to the will and commandment of God, more and more putting off the sinful habits of the world.

If then, in the light of what has been said, we ask again, Is it not arrogant pride and self glorying to say, we are saints? the answer is, Indeed not. Rather is it a humble and grateful acknowledgment that divine grace and mercy have visited us. It is the same deep humility, and yet blessed confidence, to which Dr. Martin Luther gives expression in his explanation of the second article of the creed: I believe that Jesus Christ has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, secured and delivered me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold and silver, but with his holy and precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death.

Among these saints do we find, by the grace of God, this departed wife, mother and sister, whose mortal remains we are about to carry to their last resting place. Her life and walk were a beautiful example of godliness. She leaves behind a blessed memory in the heart of her husband, who in a happy wedded life of seventeen years was permitted to experience with ever increasing gratitude and joy, what a treasure of love and faithfulness and meekness, God had given to him in his beloved wife.

And what a tender mother she was to her daughters! How she cared for the true welfare of those whom she loved, by constant intercession at the throne of God, holding fast to His word, by a holy walk and conversation, and by her serving and self-denying love! How rare in our day, in any walk of life, the man or woman who may be called a living epistle of Jesus Christ, of whom by reason of Christian faith and holy example it may be said, “Behold the disciple of Christ! Thus must we live if we would deserve the name of Christians!” by reason of Christian faith and holy example it may be said, “Behold the disciple of Christ! Thus must we live if we would deserve the name of Christians!”

Yet, strange to say, the very ones in whom the Christian virtues and works of faith are most manifest, are heard to speak of their sins, and to complain of their insufficiency, rejecting all merit and righteousness of their own and ascribing everything to the blessing and mercy of God. With St. Paul they confess, “By the grace of God I am what I am.” With Paul Gerhard, the beloved saint, they sing:

Naught have I of my own,  
Naught in the life I lead;  
What Christ hath giv’n me, that alone,  
Is worth all love indeed.

But, on the other hand, we find people who, having no reason to depend on their virtues and works, since their lives are one stain of sin, yet are not at all inclined to acknowledge their sinfulness: we hear them express reliance on their own excellency; they are for-

ever boasting of their honor, and challenging any to say aught in reproach of their character; they tell us of their good conscience, declaring that they are prepared at any time to receive their last summons to enter into the presence of the eternal Judge.

Beloved, what shall we say? Let us strive from day to day better to understand the meaning of that word which says, "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, It is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." Let us endeavor to become saints in the sense of the Holy Scriptures: that is, poor sinners who have found grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ; who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost, who ever further within us works that sanctification without which no man may see the Lord. Then, as in the case of this departed sister, it shall be said in due season of our departure, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of saints."

In cases like this the servant of God has a pleasant and beautiful duty to fulfill. At the grave of God's saints He does not lack words of comfort; the consolation descends, as it were, from above, and showers of peace and blessing are poured in richest measure. The tears of the bereaved flow, indeed, yet not in bitterness and heaviness of spirit, but sweetly and softly. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

O Lord Jesus Christ, who art the resurrection and the life, we praise thy holy name, that thou hast taken this departed sister into everlasting rest, cleansed in thy holy blood. Precious in thy sight is the death of Thy

saints. This holy truth her perfected soul even now richly tastes and eternally enjoys. Let it also be the blessed experience of this tried brother, who stands deprived of a precious treasure. Let there proceed for him from the death of his beloved wife, an abundance of blessing, heavenly gain out of earthly loss, eternal reunion after temporal separation. Let the same blessing come to all that mourn over this afflicting dispensation of thy providence. Let the blessings of the mother come down upon the children, even unto children's children. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Let this holy truth become manifest to the end also that many of those assembled here be stimulated to holier living and more earnest imitation of Christ. Let the death beds of Thy saints become like the seed corn that beareth precious fruit. May many be led to turn from the path of perdition, to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Let the day spring come for all of us, when in truth we can say, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's." Hear our prayer, O Christ, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

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## XXVIII

### A YOUNG MOTHER, WHO HAD FOUND CHRIST UP- ON HER SICK BED.

The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Jer. 31: 3.

It is not a violent, comfortless grief that fills the eyes of these mourners with tears. This sorrow has come to a Christian home. It is a mourning that has found its peace, a sore to which a healing balm has been successfully applied, a woe that has obtained consolation. Sadness may still possess their hearts as they miss the dear one, who in her life was the center of their circle of love. In her very suffering she has left an abiding influence upon the souls around her. The memory of her earnest, pale form will be a constant reminder to them to seek that which is above, the peace of God that passeth all understanding, which may be ours even while the outward man is perishing. Although there were times when her discomfort gave rise to impatience and melancholy, yet she through hope had entered into that peace. Her place in the home may appear to them as deserted and lonely as did the tomb of Jesus to the pious women on Easter morning. But what was your desire for her, even while she still cherished the liveliest hopes of recovery and of new usefulness in a consecrated life before God? Was it not that the Lord would relieve her of her suffering? That since she had so fully found him, and in him had found her first and truest happiness, He might soon take her to his arms for that "blessed sleep, from which none ever wake to weep?" We knew how well it would be with her soul. For this we often lifted up our hands in prayer, that the Good Shepherd might take his sheep unto his bosom. Did you refuse to let her go in that dark and dreary hour of parting? Nay, you said, why keep her longer in her sufferings? Her soul

had tarried long enough in the valley of death, had learned enough of this life's weariness and labor, enough also of the love and grace of God. Thus, while we shall miss her, we are reconciled. Let her rest in His presence, of whom she could say with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." May the homegoing of this pilgrim fill our hearts with longing for that peace which not only insures happiness here amidst the trials of life, but which is the one preparation for a blessed death! May the Lord bless us with that peace with which he graced our departed sister; for to her too he spoke this word when He appeared unto her, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Could we but believe that this word is also written for us!

Natural thoughts will find expression. "How well that her sufferings are at an end!" "She never could have gotten well!" Why are we so shortsighted as to see only these external things? Shall we never wish to learn the deeper things, to look into the quiet inner life, and the hidden working of the soul? Shall we never recognize that "tribulation worketh patience, and patience hope," and that "hope maketh not ashamed?" To enjoy health is not the greatest fortune, but to have peace with God. The greatest fortune is not to live long, but to live in and with God. When our sufferings, from without and within, point us to God; when by suffering more is given inwardly than is taken from us outwardly; when in place of the world that noisily passes by our



sick bed, a new world of inner happiness and sweet peace opens up within us, should not then suffering be permitted to have its place and to work its purpose in us? Instead of being afar off, it is at that very time that the Lord draws near, clasping our hand in his hand of fatherly love, separating us from the multitude that could never love as he loves us, and pouring in of his love and comfort as he tells us of the flight of time and the glory of that life which is to be.

Such was the case with the departed sister. One of her favorite passages was that in which St. Paul rejoices in Romans: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." I am frank to say that the sick-bed of this Christian young woman has greatly enriched my experience, and has filled my heart with ever greater conviction as to the sufficiency of the Christian religion to comfort the suffering, and to give present and eternal happiness. I selected her Scripture readings with great care, and it was touching to note how she meditated on the Word of God, and at succeeding visits to hear her relate the lessons she had drawn for her heart out of the truth. Whenever her mother or sister would read to her from the Book of Books, her requests were always for those passages which had given her the best comfort and counsel. As the end approached she had a deep and earnest desire to commune once more with her Saviour. What true solace the Sacrament was to her soul! The satisfied glance with which she received absolution I will never forget, for through her eyes, that mirror of the



soul, I looked down into the inner recesses of a soul whose life was with Christ. Her Saviour had spoken to her as of old: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Happy the soul that may thus relinquish the world with all that it holds dear!

The more the heart clings to earth, the harder it is to die. And so there are those who do not want to die, who refuse to think of death, though they are time and again reminded of it. On the other hand, the more the heart lives for the world to come, the more the eye has seen of the glory of that life which is "with the Lord," the more quietly is one able to take leave of this world, when the time comes to go home.

Let me beseech you, therefore, beloved, that you live in the light of eternity, remembering that after the brief span of this present time, the object for which you have lived must be tested in the light of His throne who seeth all things, and that the one question will be, whether or not in all the varied walk of this earthly pilgrimage we desired and sought the communion of God. For this is God's only desire, to have souls among all peoples who out of the proof and gain of all their earthly experience, learn to praise his love, which has drawn them unto him.

Therefore let our prayer be: "O, thou eternal Love, draw us unto Thee, as thou hast drawn this redeemed soul! O Christ, draw us unto Thee! Amen.

XXIX.

A DRUNKARD.

Eccl. 12 : I.

These words of Solomon come to our mind as we stand by this open grave which has received the mortal remains of our deceased brother. In the prime of life, at a period when others are enjoying their health and strength most and feel that they may yet live scores of years in this world, this man has been taken away by a severe and protracted illness, snatched away from his family, his wife and children. Justly we lament the power of death, who unmercifully mows down those whom God has marked for him, young and old, rich and poor. Thanks be to God that we may say as Christians: If he died earnestly believing in the mercy of the Saviour, all is well with him; then his lot has fallen in pleasant places; if he has been strong in faith and has served his Saviour faithfully in this life, then he will receive the crown of the victor. That this may be true of our deceased brother is our heartfelt hope and our fervent prayer. The ministers of the gospel do not stand by the graves of deceased church-members to eulogize them, nor to cover their sins and shortcomings with the cloak of Christian love; much less do we stand here to judge them or to condemn unmercifully and relentlessly because of their weakness. To judge is a right which belongs to a higher Being, who looketh not on the outward appearance like men, but who looketh on the heart. From this piercing eye no deed, no word, no thought of the human heart can be hidden. In

this realm every man is weighed on the scale of justice. Our duty at this grave is to draw some lessons from the life of the deceased whom we are burying, whether it serves as an example or a warning. All who are here present and have known the deceased, must openly confess that he did not always remember the passage which we have just now heard in our text. In his youth he was instructed, like all of us, in the faith of God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. When he was fourteen years old, he, like all of us, made this confession, when renewing his baptismal vows: "Whether I live, I live unto the Lord, and whether I die, I die unto the Lord; whether I live, therefore, or die, I am the Lord's." But as so many of our young people are now doing, so he turned away from the Lord and went his own way. He would have nothing to do with the church, the Word of God, or the sacraments, and led a life which made him a disgrace to his family and to all with whom he came in contact. This a minister of the gospel cannot and dare not conceal; for the Word of God is keener than a two-edged sword; he dare not fail to remember the living, who surround the grave, and are thinking of the past life of the deceased. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days came not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." The evil days for the deceased came sooner than he and others expected. The evil days and months of which we say, we have no pleasure, in them may speedily come for us. Happy he, whom the Lord, when he comes, finds a good and faithful servant!

The relatives of our departed brother testify to the humble trust in the mercy of God which marked the days, in which slowly, but steadily the terrible disease, which chained the deceased for months to a bed of sickness, attacked him, grasping his breath with an iron grip and making it difficult for him to breathe. It was during these hours of suffering that he thought of the almost forgotten faith of his childhood, and remembered the God of his youthful days, whom he had so wilfully forgotten during his days of pleasure. Now he turned to God, and sent many a prayer and petition by day and night to His throne of grace, that God might be his God once more. He listened to the exhortations and consolations of the minister, and as far as men can judge, he earnestly repented of his sins. I say, as far as men can judge; for again we must confess: "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." He alone knows whether our brother's repentance and sorrow were heartfelt; He alone knows how the man died. We hope and pray, that he died in peace, and that God the Lord mercifully forgave him his sins for the sake of His son Jesus Christ, whose body and blood he received in the Lord's Supper on the last day of his life. We hope and pray that God has given him through grace a home in the land of light, just as He gave a home eternal to the dying thief on the cross, to whom the Saviour said: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." May the Lord give to all of us His Holy Spirit, that He may teach us in time to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Let us not put off the thought of eternity

until the days come of which we shall say: we have no pleasure in them. But let us strive early to become wise unto salvation, and strive patiently to gain the life eternal.

O Father, cover all my sins  
With Jesus' merits, who alone  
The pardon that I covet wins,  
And makes his long-sought rest my own.  
My God, for Jesus sake I pray  
Thy peace may bless my dying day.

Amen,

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XXX.

A CONVERTED DRUNKARD.

Ps. 119:71.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes."—Thus, beloved, we may speak with the Psalmist at this grave. It was without doubt a path of deep and grievous humiliation through which the Lord led the deceased during the last weeks of his life in order to save his soul for life eternal. God had to take him through many days of affliction, many nights of sadness, before the strong, manly soul was touched, and the powerful physical strength was broken. It was necessary to lead him through temptations and doubts, until at last he who had always been a strong and healthful man, unaccustomed to pain, learned how hard it is to endure suffering.

In this way the Lord humbled him, that he might learn His statutes, especially the statutes of His Justice. The deceased could not and dared not deny, that he himself poured many a drop of guilt into the bitter cup of suffering. In this time of affliction the Lord revealed to Him many things in the light of His justice and led him to a heartfelt, honest repentance. But he opened to him also His divine grace. The deceased himself often said from the depth of his heart: O that the Lord may accomplish this end with me! How many penitential tears flowed from his eyes while he prayed! How many groans ascended from his heavy heart to a gracious God! We do not doubt that our heavenly Father for Christ's sake accepted them in mercy, and imputed to this broken heart that for which the Saviour suffered, and which he gained, won and obtained on the cross for this sinner also. Yes, as we commit this tired body of the deceased to the grave, so we commit his soul to the free grace of God, and pray: O Father, accept this soul, so dearly bought by the blood of Thy son, that it may gladly and gratefully confess: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes."

This word of the Psalmist is applicable also to you, who have been so sorely afflicted. The Lord has often led you in the path of humiliation. The very suffering and death of this your husband, father, son and brother, is for you a painful path. Considering all this, you too ought to learn His statutes. The widow ought to learn to place her hope in the living God alone, that she may experience, that He is a Judge of the widows. In this

affliction, the fatherless children ought to learn that God is the true father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Through this sorrow the father of the deceased, now 84 years old, should learn to understand the word of Paul: "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ." And through this bereavement, which is the second one in your family, all of you, beloved, should learn to strive for the life eternal. If the Lord accomplishes this end, then you also will confess: It is good for me that I have been afflicted.

For all of us, beloved friends, this present death bears a solemn lesson. Here we learn how much the Lord desires to save us and to make us happy forever; how He used every means to attain this divine end. Here we learn what a dreadful thing sin is in the eyes of the Lord, and how heavily His chastening hand can rest upon us. And finally we learn, how he cleanseth our souls in the fire of tribulation, and prepares them for heaven. We should therefore acknowledge and praise His mercy even at this grave. O Lord,

Give us the strength, the dauntless faith,  
That Thou hast purchased with Thy death,  
And lead us to that glorious place,  
Where we shall see the Father's face.

O Lamb of God, who once wast slain,  
We thank Thee for that bitter pain.  
Let us partake Thy death, that we  
May enter into life with Thee.

Amen.



XXXI.

AN ANARCHIST AND ATHEIST CONVERTED ON  
HIS DEATH-BED.

Ps. 130:7.

The disciples of Christ are able to rejoice beside an open grave, because they can speak of grace and salvation. Where human hope comes to an end, there our Christian hope attains its goal. Yes, blessed be God, that we can stand by this grave, full of praise and hope. How often do we look into the grave with fear. But here we can gladly and thankfully exclaim: With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him there is plenteous redemption.

You have all been acquainted with the deceased. You have known him as a frank, honest man, as a faithful husband and father. But you have also known him as an unbeliever, who opposed God and His Son by word and deed. God, however, has performed a miracle! How trying it was for the sturdy, industrious man, when a slow disease held him bed-fast. He saw and experienced much affliction in this world. And during the long days of dreary idleness, during the long, sleepless nights, he meditated upon what might be the cause of all misery and pain in this world. Then God opened his eyes and showed him how peace and rest disappear from the world and from the individual heart, when the fear of God vanishes. This thought conquered the strong man, and when he was filled with divine love, he lifted up his

hands to the Lord, with whom is mercy and plenteous redemption.—Then his soul found peace. After he had prayed with his pastor for the first time, he lay quite still for some time and then confessed: I feel like a different man since I have prayed. After the celebration of the Lord's supper, it was as if sunshine poured into the death-chamber. Then the fear of death disappeared. His frankness, which his old comrades know, prompted him to confess openly the faith of his heart. And as if there were many things for which he was thankful in his affliction, he said in his last hour: Yes, it is all very good, but the best part is, that I have found again a loving God.

For this reason there is sunshine in our souls, though we stand by a grave. May the sun of righteousness shine into your hearts and comfort you, the afflicted widow and the weeping parents of the deceased. Do you remember his words, dear sister: "I am not troubled for you and the children; for God will help you?" God, who had so much compassion on your husband and son, will never leave you or neglect you. He has taken away the father from the little children; but the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. With the Lord is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption. Do not seek the living among the dead. At this grave Christ's word comforts us: He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

To all who surround this grave, the silent lips of the deceased bear a two-fold message. In the first place they tell us, that even for the proudest heart or the

strongest will, the hour will come when it lies broken on the ground and cries to God: "O Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." And when the world and the lust thereof passeth away, then we discover that there is no salvation except in Jesus Christ. In the second place, they tell us, that we have a Saviour who hears prayer and saves the dying from death. Christ receiveth sinful men. With the Lord is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption. Amen.

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## XXXII

### A MASON, ACCIDENTALLY KILLED.

1 Sam. 20:3.

"Truly, as the Lord liveth, there is but a step between me and death." Does not the awful truth of this verse impress itself upon our souls, while we stand by this casket? Unexpectedly the cold hand of death has snatched away this strong and sturdy man in the prime of manhood. He who left his home in the morning, happy and healthy, was brought back at noon a corpse. As a flash of lightning scorches in an instant the pith of a blossoming tree, so this young life has been suddenly destroyed without a moment's warning. Truly, there is but a step between us and death.

O, my friends, where shall we find comfort? Men cannot find words in an hour like this; men are poor comforters indeed. Where then is balm for the deep

wound inflicted upon you by this terrible casualty, which you think, will break your heart? Neither herb nor plaster can heal this wound; but, bless the Lord, we have His Word which heals everything. The Word of God offers comfort even when the comfort of men avails nothing. And in this hour also the Word of God points heavenward, directing your hearts to Him without whose good and gracious will nothing occurs, whatever it may be. It is the Lord, oh remember it; it is the Lord who has done this! And He who can take away life can also restore it. Our brother has not become the victim of a blind accident, or even of human heedlessness alone; but it is the Lord who has called him according to His will, which is always good and gracious even when we cannot understand or comprehend it.

You do not understand it at present, nor do you comprehend why God has sent you this affliction. A thousand questions are harrowing your heart: Why should this calamity befall us, why did it happen thus and not some other way! Why so suddenly without our knowing of it or even suspecting it! It is the fact that you were thinking and speaking of him as a living person while the messenger of death was already on his way, which paralyzes your heart, as it were. Over against these thoughts, these complaints, these questions, we will set the words: "I will keep silent and not open my mouth, for thou, thou hast done this." It is the Lord, and His way is always holy, all His deeds are blessings, and God himself is light. Is He not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and in Him also our Father?

In Christ we perceive all His thoughts to be thoughts of love, all His deeds to be deeds of love. He, who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, should not He love us? Should not He, who sent His only begotten Son into the depths of the death on the cross, who suffered Him to endure the agonies of death for us in order to deliver us eternally from sin and death, should not He have thoughts of peace toward us? O cling to the hand of your God. Though it be difficult, say to God: "I trust in Thee. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." And He who has promised, "Behold, I am with you alway," will help you to bear this grievous affliction, and will cause fruit for eternity to spring forth from this calamity.

But also for all of us the sudden death of our Christian brother should bear a permanent blessing. As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between me and death. Today we are called upon to realize the solemn truth of these words. Daily, hourly, we are threatened by death, and yet we foolish people live day after day as if we could live eternally. O listen to the solemn sermon which God has preached today, and let us remember in time the things which belong unto our peace. There is only One who can help us, Jesus Christ the crucified, the Prince of life. He who has suffered death for us, has overcome the fear of death; in Him we have life, the assurance of life eternal. Cling to Him in faith; let Him be the light of your countenance and your peace. Then, though death fall upon you like an armed man,

you can exclaim: Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen

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XXXIII.

A CARPENTER ACCIDENTALLY KILLED.

Ps. 31:5.

In this verse King David has taught us a short, but pithy prayer, and he who can pray it in his last hour, dies well. We wonder whether he, by whose grave we now stand, breathed this prayer during his fall into that awful depth? Whether, while his mortal body was lying on the ground with broken limbs, this comforting thought came to him, that his spirit, his immortal soul, would find a resting-place in the hands of a merciful and gracious God? We hope it, but we do not know. God alone knows. The whole life of the deceased lies before Him like an open book. He knows also whether or not the man died in faith. This much is certain: even a sudden departure from this life can be blissful, can open the gates of Paradise to the redeemed soul, as well as a slow death on a sick bed. How many of our fellow-citizens, who forty-three years ago fought for the Union were snatched away on the bloody battle-field from their loved ones as suddenly as this husband, father and brother! And their loved ones found comfort in the assurance, that even in the thunder of battle our Father in heaven hears the dying prayers of His children, and rejects no one who puts his trust in Him. Surely no small

dangers are connected with the work in which the deceased was engaged since his confirmation. Daily it was true with him as with the soldier on the battle-field, "There is but a step between me and death." All human precaution is vain; there remains but one thing which can bring help, the prayer of the royal Psalmist: "Into Thy hand I commit my spirit." How thoughtless and foolish it is to neglect this life insurance which is open for everyone, through faith in the great merit of Christ, which the good God counts through grace as a means of salvation for all. O that you would know it, friends and co-workers of the deceased, that you would know how fearlessly and gladly you can tread the most dangerous paths praying to the Father reconciled in Christ. Then you "would know at least in this your day," while you are standing by this open grave, "the things which belong unto your peace." God has often reminded him, whom we bury to-day with all the honors of his trade—and he has deserved this by his long, faithful and skillful labor—"Today you are living, therefore be converted today; before tomorrow it may be too late." Did not his oldest brother, while engaged in the same trade, meet his death in a similar manner? And the deceased himself had been suffering for weeks from a wound which he had incurred by a dangerous leap, and which was just healing when death took him away. Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

What shall I say, to you, his loved ones? You complain because your dear one has been taken away from



you in the prime of life, much too early, you think. Two of his four children not yet confirmed, and the oldest one not yet strong enough to support himself. Can we not readily understand why the mother, who has become a widow so unexpectedly, thinks with tears of the future? And almost as heavy is the heart of the sister, since this brother was the last of eleven brothers and sisters, with whom she had been brought up. But it is the Lord who has led you into this valley of the shadow of death, the good God, your Father in heaven, without whose will not a sparrow falleth to the ground, and much less a human being, created in His image, for whom the redeeming blood of His dear Son flowed on Calvary. We cannot demand anything from Him, not a year, not a day of this life. It is pure grace that you have kept the dear deceased with you this long, until the 42d year of his life. And since the hand of God has taken him away now, commit yourselves the more earnestly to His faithful guidance, which will never cease. He who has redeemed you, must also love you. O remain in His love, and give Him faithfulness for faithfulness. The Lord has done all things well; He will do well in the future, yea, to all eternity. Amen.

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#### XXXIV.

#### A SUDDEN DEATH FROM HEART FAILURE.

Luke 35:37.

As a thief in the night, death has come upon our brother, and snatched away a husband and father with-

out a moment's warning. Truly, a sudden death like this deeply affects your hearts, and it is hard for you to submit to this dark affliction sent by God. But, beloved, what would the Christian faith be worth, if it did not remain firm even in the hour of sadness? No, though such a death may depress us deeply, we can lift up our heads, for we have this blessed promise: "The Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted." Did not our deceased brother during his life realize the truth of these words? At his birth we thought he could live but a few hours; yet the Lord spared his life for more years than we expected when we considered his weak body and his internal disease. God did not call him away from this world until he had again found the right path, and had been converted from the path of sin to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul. The Lord, therefore, has not left us at this casket without the hope, that His mercy has finished its work in him and has led him to the goal of eternity. How beautiful, how grand is the faith of a Christian. Even in the deepest affliction we are not left without comfort; we can speak of the hope of a life everlasting while standing by the casket or grave of a believer. Only the hope of eternal life in Christ can give us consolation, so that we do not despair. The light of the gospel sends its radiant rays even into the darkness of death.

We, also, are approaching this eternity, and our hearts are filled with holy fear while we stand by this casket. This sudden death puts to our hearts and consciences the serious question: Are we prepraed for

eternity? Beloved, this casket recalls to our memory the words of the Master Jesus Christ: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching."

Let your loins be girded about; that is, hold in check the desires and cravings of your hearts, that they may not break forth and destroy your souls. Who can frivolously yield to the desire of his heart, when he knows that the hand of God may snatch him away in the midst of his sinful carousals, and place him before the judgment bar? Who can set his heart upon the treasures of this world and be swallowed up by the desire of gaining and accumulating earthly treasures, when he has these warning words of God continually before him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning. If we would enter the kingdom of His glory, we must go to meet the Lord with the bright light of faith. Only faith can help us in death; faith alone can save us in the hour of dissolution; living faith in the Lord Jesus, who has borne our sins, reconciled us to God, and by His death gained for us life eternal. We must accept Him as our Lord and Saviour, put our trust in Him, live in Him and serve Him in holiness and truth; for he only is prepared to meet death, who is on the Lord's side in

this life. O, we will cling to Jesus, that we may be found with Him in the hour of death. My God, for Jesus' sake I pray, thy peace may bless my dying day.

Thus we shall be like unto the servants who are waiting for their master when he will return from the wedding. Though our body may be sleeping, our soul is watching and our heart hears the footsteps of the Lord. And when He suddenly knocks and calls: Open the door! we are watching and hasten to do His will. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching; yea, blessed, for He will recognize them as his faithful servants, His children. He will take them into His kingdom. Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Watch and pray! Dear Lord, awaken us that we may be ready gladly to receive thy Son at His coming! Amen.

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### XXXV.

#### A SUICIDE.

Gen. 4: 4-10.

You know, beloved fellow-Christians, how this man who lies before us, met his death. He died on Good Friday, but not in faith in Him who died for us on the cross on that day, but in despair, by his own hand! On their way to church the people found his corpse. You know also that generally it is not customary for a minister to approach the grave of a suicide with prayer and the

word of God. But I believe that I may stand here; for our unhappy brother was demented. He has committed this deed ignorantly and unconsciously, and God, for Christ's sake, will be a merciful Judge to him. But I must stand here and speak; for, as a faithful servant of God in this congregation, I must publicly censure a wrong, whatever the consequences may be for myself.

The reasons which drove the deceased to the commission of this terrible deed, were, as we all know, the cares and troubles of life. Physically and mentally he was unable to earn a living for himself. But he had wealthy relatives who had promised to support him. They did not keep their promise. He was sent from one to the other, till finally no one wanted him any longer, and starvation stared him in the face. Relatives of the deceased! I stand before you as a severe messenger. In the name of God I ask you: Where is your brother? What have you done with your brother? You shrug your shoulders; but God answers in your place: The voice of your brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. O, I know, he was a burden to you; but he was flesh of your flesh, and the dying father of this unhappy one entrusted him to your care. Now he is standing before the throne of God and accuses you! Your uncharitableness has driven him into despair, into death! I say this, not to pain you, but to warn you, lest the curse of Cain fall upon you. It is well for us to save and to economize! But woe unto him to whom money becomes a snare! Woe unto us if money fills our hearts and chokes our conscience.

My friends, not only the relatives, but all of us must accuse ourselves as we stand by this grave, and I will not exclude myself. If we had shown a kinder disposition toward this poor man lying here before us, if we had listened patiently to his complaints, if we had helped him kindly, perhaps he would have taken courage and borne his burden, and would not be where he is now. We are all prone to say: Am I my brother's keeper? What is this one or that one to me? I am under no obligations to him; and we do not consider that this word, this question, was the password, the principle of a murderer! We pass others so coldly, so unconcernedly, and do not perceive the pain which is distorting their faces; we have no idea of the despair which is filling their souls, and which we perhaps could alleviate by a kind word! But let each one of us, as we look on this unfortunate one, resolve that in the future we will be more considerate to others; that we will have the welfare of others more at heart, and will do good without ceasing. For whosoever knoweth to do good and doeth it not, shall hear the accusation: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground!" Amen.

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XXXVI.

A SUICIDE.

Math. 26: 41.

We have brought the mortal remains of this man to their last resting place, and an exceptionally large concourse of people has assembled by this grave. Why have

so many of you come? “What went ye out for to see? a reed shaken with the wind?” Or do you desire to see a judge who shall pronounce a sentence upon him who has condemned himself? Truly, I tell you, whosoever has come with sinful intentions, not feeling the deepest sympathy with the unspeakable sorrow of the deeply afflicted relatives, let him step back from this grave, that he may not commit a sin. But whosoever has come judging the dead in a kind, Christian spirit, offering heartfelt prayer, “Lord, be merciful unto his soul,” let him come closer, that his sympathetic tears may fall into this grave; let him also humbly pray: Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!

We are not assembled by this grave to sit in judgment upon the deceased. We have no right to pronounce the “Not guilty;” but at the same time we are not entitled to condemn him unmercifully; for the Lord has commanded: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. Condemn not and ye shall not be condemned.” He stands now before his Judge, who will judge him rightly, and will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.

My words at this grave are rather addressed to you who are still on the way. And what I say, I say to you all: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” In the first place I wish to speak these words, from the depth of my sympathizing heart, to you who have been so sadly afflicted by this death. Truly, a sadder calamity and a harder trial cannot be found anywhere. Men offer their sympathy to you, but they cannot remove your sorrow. Men offer their sympathy to



you, but they cannot give you the true comfort. Therefore let us go to God, watching and praying, and entrust to Him whatever oppresses the poor heart. He knows how to deliver the believer out of temptation, and He will give the peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised by watching and chastening! Though there may be dark destinies which we cannot possibly avert either by praying or by watching, yet we will say:

Lord Jesus, by Thy passion to Thee I make my prayer;  
Thou, who in mercy smilest, have mercy, Lord and spare;

O wash me in the fountain that floweth from Thy side;  
O clothe me in the raiment Thy blood hath purified.

As a servant of God I feel it to be my calling and my duty to speak this word of warning to you all with the fervor of faith and love: Watch and pray! By watching and praying much misery might be averted; therefore, do not become weary of watching, but take heed to yourselves, put on the armor of the spirit; continue praying that God may keep you from temptations, and do not refuse to persevere in the struggle which is ordained for you.

This grave warns us: Watch and pray! And these words are addressed especially to the youthful souls who, deeply affected, are standing with me by this grave. With fear and trembling I am speaking; for this is the hardest official duty I have ever been called upon to perform during my pastorate. The young man, whom we are burying now, who gave me much joy while in

school, but now has inflicted a deep wound upon my heart, was one of the dearest members in my confirmation class. Like you, he willingly accepted the teaching of the gospel, and gave promise of fulfilling my greatest hopes. Considering his dreadful end, I say to you, his young friends, with a strong emphasis: Watch and pray. Awake! calls the warning voice of God and of His holy law, and the voice of the conscience in our hearts. Look into your heart, look up to your God, watch with prayer and supplication, that the old arch-enemy may not destroy you by his snares, nor lead you away from God into destruction.

I cannot compel or force you to take heed to this solemn warning; but I beseech you with my whole loving heart, my dearly beloved spiritual children. By the salvation of your souls I beg you and charge you: Watch for the enemy, who aims at robbing you of your crown. Each one of you has his special temptation. Each has his weak side, where the adversary may easily enter and steal the jewels out of the treasury of the heart. Therefore I beseech and admonish you: Walk as in the day, in the bright light of the grace of God, whose strength is mighty in the weak; and continue in prayer, that the Lord may give you strength and help you not only to desire but also to do the will of His good pleasure.

If there should be those present who will not listen to this kind of warning, who close their ears to the holy words of God, who rebel against the obedience of faith, and who will not accept God's chastenings, I will not hold my peace before them, but will arise in the strength

of God and warn them of the perdition to which sin leads. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever man soweth, that shall he also reap." He who will not listen to the loving voice of God will be obliged to tremble before His justice. He who will not awake from the sleep of sin to a new life in Christ, but prefers to remain spiritually dead in sin, is committing suicide in his own inner life. Therefore, whosoever has ears to hear, let him hear! The Lord will judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Amen.

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### XXXVII.

#### A PHYSICIAN, WHO DIED DURING LENT.

I. Sam. 1:26.

We have just entered the Lenten season, which reminds us of the suffering and death of our Saviour. A Lenten season in the saddest sense of the word it was for this man, whose mortal remains we consign to the grave today. He, who was able to save the lives of many, who, with the help of God Almighty, was able to restore many to health, now lies before us a victim of death, mourned for by the afflicted wife and the weeping relatives. What is man, what are his hopes, his works? Let us consider this question which the open

grave suggests, and try to find an answer in the Word of God. Let us ask the divine Comforter for comfort. Seven years ago the deceased came to our community as a physician. He arrived with the enthusiastic zeal of a man loving his profession. Then he was a stranger to us, born in a distant part of our country, and grown to manhood amid different surroundings. But not long did he remain a stranger. Soon he became one of our number; soon he was busily engaged in the arduous and strenuous work of a physician. As he labored in our community and in the sick-room with love and faithfulness, so he also reaped love and confidence, the firm foundation of medical proficiency. Wherever he approached a bed of sickness, in his plain, affectionate manner, weary eyes hopefully looked up to him, knowing that he would supply all that human skill could offer. His labor and care belonged to the sick. By day and by night, in storm and rain, in burning heat and biting cold, he was indefatigable and ready to help wherever help was needed. By his earnest and faithful labor he built up a thriving practice, and won the love and esteem of all his fellow men. He lived as happily as a man can live in this world. Here he entered the state of holy matrimony, and here, together with his faithful wife, he spent many a happy hour. But he also endured many sorrowful afflictions during this short time. His heart was gladdened by the successive birth of three children; but the Lord who gave them, soon took them again. Recognizing God's will, he endured these afflictions without a murmur. Patiently and resignedly he bore the heavy

cross which the Lord laid upon him. During the first stage of his disease he would not neglect his patients; his profession, his patients were his only care. He wanted to soothe the pains of others, and had no time to think of himself, and when, only at the anxious solicitations of his loved ones, he sought medical advice, which he hardly needed, it was too late. He had decided as to the nature of his disease long before, but not a word of murmur or complaint came from his lips; quietly and patiently he suffered to the last. Deeply religious by nature, he lived as a Christian and died as a Christian; this I can confess openly, having stood with him by many a sick-bed, by his own sick-bed, and finally by his dying couch. Courageously he looked into the face of death; with a last handshake he said farewell to his wife, to his loved ones, who had prayed with him before. He who dies thus, dies well. Not only I, united as I was with the deceased by the close bond of friendship, but all of you who knew him and loved him, can exclaim with David at this grave: "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me." We feel the deep sorrow of the sadly afflicted wife, we share the grief of the mourning relatives; but we know also, that true comfort in an hour like this can be found only in God. May God Almighty give you such comfort and strength. We know that during his life the deceased lived according to the Word, and therefore we feel that he will gain the reward promised in those beautiful words: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Amen.

XXXXIII.

A HUMBLE PASTOR.

Luke 26:28.

We are assembled by a casket. It is not our wish, but it is the will of God, that we should stand mourning at this place of death. And what God does is well done.

It was a dear and precious soul which lived in this mortal body, and has now gone home to its God, gone home into the land of peace, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling place of saints. He was held dear and cherished by his loved ones, by the deeply afflicted companion of his life who has lost in him a faithful husband, by the weeping children, who mourn the loss of a tender, loving father. He was cherished and revered by many other relatives and friends, and also by myself, having been united with him for thirteen years in the bonds of friendship and affinity of souls. In accordance with his last wish, I will speak a few words of grateful remembrance, and at the same time, by the help of God, words of comfort to his loved ones.

The Saviour once said to His disciples: "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." These are words which, in the first place, I desire to apply to the dear deceased. At last he can lift up his head; for he never did so in this world. He went through life with bowed head. For he was a very humble man, never making himself conspicuous; a meek man, who with wondrous patience endured injustice and injury, taking as his pattern his Master who said of himself: "I am meek and lowly in heart;" with bowed head, for he was of-



ten unjustly misunderstood, despised, and neglected, in this respect also resembling his Master, who was despised and rejected of men. All his life he lived in poverty, in subordinate positions, not recognized by the great of this world, though he surpassed many of them in proficiency, in purity and strength of character, and in genuine piety, and always belonged to the number of those who consider obedience to the powers that are ordained of God the sacred duty of every Christian. He did not gain many friends, not even in the congregations where he preached the Word of God; but he did gain true and faithful friends among the lowly of the land, among souls who put their trust in God. They will retain a fond remembrance of him through all their lives, and will bear testimony for him at the mercy seat. He was a bright and shining light, whose proper place would have been on a candlestick. There it could have lighted the way for many who are wandering in darkness, and could have warmed many cold hearts. But it was placed under a bushel and went out unnoticed. His cross was, indeed, heavy to bear. For a long time God afflicted him with pain and illness. Let us rejoice, because his redemption has drawn nigh; because, at last, he can gladly lift his head. We commit his frail and mortal body to the ground and bury it in a grave on the same day on which his beloved mother fell asleep a few years ago. She, as well as his sainted father, is now rejoicing over his blessed departure; for his spirit returns now to its God, to the triune God, who has created, redeemed, and sanctified it.



Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh. This is a word of comfort for you, mourning relatives. You, my dear sister, now a deeply afflicted widow, you, beloved children of the deceased, you now sadly and sorrowfully bow your heads. But that is not the proper attitude for a Christian, not even for a mourning Christian. Under all circumstances the Christian should look confidently to heaven. The Lord says to you also in this hour: Lift up your heads! You also can join with David in the words: I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Your God has had thoughts of peace toward the deceased; He has thoughts of peace toward you also. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and He shall bring it to pass. For you also the hour of redemption will draw nigh, when all sorrow shall cease, and all tears shall be wiped away; when you shall see him again, for whom you now mourn; when you shall see him again in eternal joy and blessed light. God be praised for this blessed assurance. He, whose heart is filled with this hope, cannot feel discouraged in days of sadness. No, he lifts up his head because his redemption draweth nigh unto him. Let us look forward to that hour of redemption with hope, and so live in this world that we may rest assured that some day we shall inherit the life eternal.

And now, farewell, dear soul! We thank thee for all the love which thou hast shown us during the time of thy pilgrimage in this world. Thou hast often filled our

hearts with gladness; and we shall retain a fond recollection of thee in our hearts.

We would thank thee, O merciful God, for all the love and kindness which thou hast manifested toward our dear departed brother, for all the blessings which thou hast showered upon him during his brief but faithful ministry. Accept his soul through grace, and let it now see what it believed and hoped for in this world. Comfort the afflicted hearts, which will so sadly miss him; let the children, whose education he could not finish, be brought up in the fear of the Lord. Speak thou to every heart at this place of death, that we may love thy Word; and zealously and earnestly strive to gain the life eternal. Amen.

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### XXXIX.

#### AN OFFICER OF THE CHURCH.

Math. 5:6.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

Nothing more beautiful and nothing better than this can be said at this sad hour. No other words than these, which his friends during his life, often secretly applied to him would have better pleased the deceased. For these words suggest the trend which his life, in the last decade, and perhaps longer, has taken, and they point to that grand goal, which, through the grace of God, his

finished life has reached. It was the one desire of his life that God's word should appease his hunger and quench his thirst.

What the boy felt, but did not comprehend; what the young man, in the midst of his military career, desired, but had not yet experienced; namely, that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, this full-grown man seized with great gladness, and held fast with a steadfast faith until his death. With holy earnestness he professed his faith in Christ to a friend who for weeks had been his guest. He searched the Scriptures deeply, he listened attentively to the sermons, he entered earnestly into discussions which pertained not to worldly vanity, but to the one thing needful. Even at the last prayer-meeting which he attended, only six days before his death, the sincerity with which he worshipped proved this to be true.

How important and full of meaning to him, were the discussions on the life after death! Could God have given him any promise which would have helped him to prepare himself more for his death, than the blessed assurance of a life beyond the grave? Today many complaints are made that so many do not follow the Lord, but treat with contempt His lenient scepter. Here, however, sleeps one man of whom we may confidently say: "This one also was with Jesus of Nazareth." He hungered and thirsted after the righteousness of God. One cannot gain this righteousness through works, as the Pharisees supposed; God gives it gratuitously. Yet one

may with holy zeal yearn for it, hunger and thirst after it. As our Saviour says, blessed is such a man; for he shall receive this gift, his thirst shall be quenched.

The voice of our friend has been stilled in death. His hunger for righteousness began here in time. He was conscious of his many sins, but he hoped for a full forgiveness. Daily he had to fight against sin, but in the thick of the fight his heart was filled with peace. His nature was prone to vehemence, but manly was his fight against it. His wife and his friends often were witnesses of his victories over the many temptations to which he was subject through bodily weakness. The words enjoined upon him from the altar, at his installation as an officer in the church, "Be not afraid, only believe," hung, written in letters of silver on the wall of his room; and these same words were inscribed in golden letters on his heart, helping him to be patient and confident in the Lord. And how richly God blessed him; at the Lord's Supper, where he was a frequent guest; through his loving wife, who so fully understood him, that she often expressed his very thoughts; in heart to heart talks with God-fearing friends; even in this very spot, where his casket now rests, just a short time ago he was richly blessed. And now he has been filled, his hunger is satisfied, his thirst is quenched. Now he is tasting the life after death. Without a struggle he has gone home, like a weary child, into the arms of his heavenly Father. He had planned to seek relief for his sick body in the balmy South; but God knew a pleasanter journey for him, and called him unto Himself.

When we realize that he is at home, how can we be mournful? May his wife, from whom he has been separated, find comfort in the thought, that what God does is best. Slightly improved in health, God permitted him to return from his southern trip last year, and blessed his home with many joys that formerly were not so abundantly given; He gave him strength to attend almost regularly our Sunday services and weekly prayer-meetings, and to take part in social gatherings at home or elsewhere with relatives or friends. And the Sunday evening previous to his death, he spent with his pastor at the parsonage. Then came a brief illness, an easy death and eternal bliss. Sufficient reason for us to magnify the Lord! All praise be to God!

The congregation whose trustees show their last honor to their brother, the school with all its officers and instructors and also the poor, who by this death are losing a friend, praise God for all He has been to the deceased, who so faithfully fulfilled his duty as treasurer of the church and as a benefactor of the needy. You, dear friend and co-laborer in the congregation, thank God for the rich blessings which he gave you for almost ten years, and glorify God, I know, especially because your loved one died in the faith. His relatives and friends, the faithful physician and myself together with my wife and child, praise God for all the departed has done for us. God grant that all present may take home with them the ardent desire of the deceased for reconciliation with our God, forgiveness of our sins, and eternal life. May it be the one aim of our lives to hunger and thirst after

righteousness, so that when our lives here on earth are ended, we may reach the coveted goal and our hunger and thirst may be completely satisfied. Amen.

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## XL.

### THE OLDEST MEMBER OF A CONGREGATION.

#### Revelations 3: 11.

In Christ beloved friends; let us, on this sad occasion, consider these words of Scripture: "Behold, I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown." "Behold I come quickly." In the loneliness and feebleness of old age the departed always seized upon similar passages of Scripture with a longing heart. He was destined to endure a long period of waiting, during which it became necessary for him to experience the true inner gain which comes through patience and faith. So long a life, spent in the communion of the Church, is one that has richly experienced the grace of God and the firm assurance of faith even though it may have been a life filled with toil and labor, sorrow and sadness. But for this very reason, it is our duty always to keep before our eyes and in our heart the glory of the Lord which we have experienced, and to extol it before the future generation. Now this aged father's longing has been satisfied; the Lord has come. And believing and hoping, we shall follow our brother into the realms of eternal life.

The relatives, it is true will sadly mourn the departure of the head of their family; and all the more, because the reminiscences and experiences of olden times and their venerable customs depart with such an aged man, and because their care of him during a long period of suffering strengthened the natural bonds of love. But this mourning is meant by God to draw our hearts closer to the eternal world, and to teach us more and more that the words, "Behold, I come quickly," are spoken to us also. In the meantime the steadfast faith of the departed remains as a most precious legacy to you. May you endeavor in time to obtain from God true honor and the crown of life, the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of the grace of God; for you know how important it is in old age to possess the true inner treasures of the heart.

But the departure of the oldest member of our church is also a lesson for the whole congregation. For the grave, into which we place the mortal remains of a representative of a past time, admonishes us that while we advance with the times, we should also hold fast that which we have received from our fathers and forefathers, and make it the guiding star of our lives; namely, that which alone will crown us eternally, Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord. Amen.



XLI.

AN INDUSTRIOUS MAN, SIXTY YEARS OLD.

Isaiah 57:2.

This is the second time, dearly beloved, that I have conducted a funeral service in this home. The first time it was the faithful mother, whom God took from her loved ones. This time it is the beloved father who has been called. He was taken home by the Lord, who turneth man to destruction and saith: Return ye children of men. In His name I stand before you beloved, as a servant of Christ, repeating the words of the prophet: "He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." I am persuaded that these words will bring peace and comfort to you, because the departed was a man who was always striving to walk worthily before God and men and also before himself.

He was faithful during his whole life, and always performed his duties to the best of his ability. His reputation in our community was the best possible. We are living in a time when wickedness and vice abound, when honesty and uprightness are seldom found, and when good men must endure the slanders of the wicked. He paid no attention to such slanders; he did not forsake the straight path; he offended no one, and he gave to each his just dues.

He faithfully fulfilled his duty. He took pride and pleasure in filling the position which God had entrusted to him. From morning till evening he labored industri-

ously, and was never lacking in diligence and zeal. He won the confidence of his employers, and was often entrusted with responsible positions.

At home, he also proved his faithfulness. He was a faithful husband to his wife. As long as she lived, he labored for her, and endeavored to make their home pleasant in every respect. Splendor and extravagance were unknown to him; he lived a simple life, and his labors were crowned with success. He was a strict, but just father, and in this hour his children will confess that his loss is irreparable. He gave his heart to the Lord, and trusted in Him throughout his whole life. Even during the hours of suffering he did not complain, but said: "What God does is well done," and humbly submitted to the will of God.

Now his life is finished, his heart has ceased to beat. But we find comfort in the words of the prophet: "He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." We surround this grave, as Christians, and not as heathen, who have no hope. We know that he went home to his Saviour and to his beloved wife, who went before him, just a few weeks ago. He has found the peace for which he longed. We commit his body to the ground, that there it may rest in its narrow bed, while his immortal soul has found its way to fields of eternal bliss. He was faithful unto death, and therefore a crown of life shall be given unto him. We firmly believe in a love which rules the whole world and every individual being; which even in the darkest hours of life brings peace to us, and will finally guide

us through the darkness of death and the grave into the eternal home. The deceased has found peace. But his sudden death should be a solemn warning to us to watch and pray that we may not fall into temptation; to labor and to strive, because we know not how soon the hour cometh when no man can work. Let this be the thought which we take home from this grave: He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness. Amen.

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## XLII.

### AN OLD MAN OF EIGHTY YEARS.

Luke 10:7.

“The laborer is worthy of his hire.” These words were spoken by the Saviour to His disciples, when He sent them as laborers into His harvest to gather the fruit which had sprung up from the good seed which He, the sower, had sown into men’s hearts. In the same sense Paul calls himself a laborer, when he says of his work as an apostle: “I have labored more abundantly than they all.” These words of Holy Writ refer therefore in the first place to spiritual labor in the propagation of the Gospel. But we may also apply them to the labors of our hands, and are justified therefore in using it as our text today. “He labored more than many others;” thus we may truly say of our brother, who has gone to his rest after laboring for almost eighty-one years. True, he was compelled to rest during the last few months of his

life; for the weakness of old age confined him to his bed. But as long as he was able to work, he did not seek rest, but labored unceasingly. A laborer is worthy of his hire; and the deceased received a rich reward for his labor. He accumulated treasures of this world. His children will gratefully acknowledge this, and their gratitude is a part of the reward he so justly deserved for his faithful labor. Yea, it seems to me that such gratitude of our children, such loving remembrance on the part of posterity, is a higher and better reward than the mere external success of our labor. And this reminds us that our life ought to have a higher aspiration and a desire for a better reward than that which follows merely upon the work of our hands. It is especially the labor for our souls which we should not forget. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul? To prepare our hearts, to keep them clean from the snares of sin, and willingly to receive the good seed of the Word of God—such labor is hard, but also richly blessed and worthy of a higher reward than the labor of our hands in our earthly vocation. And the reward is a good conscience, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost and the salvation of the soul. This, as the Bible says, is the principal business of the Christian, to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed; to walk in faith, love, humility and kindness, remembering that he must give an account of himself to God. Therefore “let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.” But where there is a harvest there must also have been a

sowing. If we do not till the soil, we cannot expect a harvest. The seed is the Word of God. Whoever hears it and obeys it diligently will reap the fruit of the new life, which remains eternally, which overcomes even death and the grave. Let us then be faithful laborers; faithful in small things as well as in great things, faithful in the labor for our souls, in our striving after salvation. Then when the evening has come the Master will call his laborers in and give them their hire. He will give them a rich reward of grace. Amen.

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#### XLIII.

#### AN AGED AND CHILDESS WIDOW OF A PHYSICIAN.

Isaiah 63 : 7.

“I will mention the lovingkindness of the Lord.” These words of the prophet Isaiah are well adapted to express our thoughts and feelings as we stand by this casket. The prophet admonishes us to remember the loving-kindnesses of the Lord; and if we say anything on this occasion, what can it be but words of thanksgiving for the lovingkindnesses which the Lord so richly bestowed upon the deceased during her life? Often in an hour like this we hear complaints and lamentations, and the memory of the deceased calls forth thoughts of sadness and sorrow. But at this grave it is fitting to remember the many blessings which the Lord bestowed upon our sister during her life.

She reached an age to which only few people attain. Often, also, life's evening is darkened by clouds and afflictions, so that life is only a burden, resting heavily on the faint and feeble heart. But the deceased enjoyed, until lately, physical strength as well as mental alertness. How often we admired the mental capacities which she possessed in her old age. As she did not experience any of the sufferings of old age, she passed away from this world without tasting the bitter cup of affliction, without enduring the agonies of death. In view of these eternal blessings alone, how much reason we have to exclaim with the prophet at this grave: "I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord."

But these words have a deeper meaning and call forth a deeper gratitude when we remember how many inward blessings God bestowed upon our deceased sister. By nature she was strong intellectually as well as kind-hearted, and she used these gifts for the benefit of others. Hers was a noble soul, striving for the ideal, trampling under foot the low and base, seeking and loving above all else that which elevates heart and soul and enriches the inner life. She had a deep understanding and a warm interest for the many different activities in church life, and it was wonderful to observe her keen interest in home and foreign missions. Closely connected with this is another trait of her character which you may perhaps remember—the rich measure of kindness and love which she possessed. Even in the memory of those with whom she was not very closely connected, she will always live as a kind, benevolent, loving woman. And

those who were intimately acquainted with her know how warmly her heart beat for the weal and woe of others, how she felt the sorrow of others in sympathetic love, how she could rejoice in the happiness of others. As she had lost her husband early in life, and never could call a loving child her own, she was alone for many years. But her life was not lonesome. Her tender, sympathetic love, which opened her heart and hand never allowed a feeling of loneliness to arise in her. This bond of love united her to the last moment of her life with her brothers, sisters, and relatives. This love prompted her to help, comfort and gladden many a weeping heart; this love impelled her to take an active part in aid societies and works of Christian benevolence in general. Thus she understood the noble art of making her lonely life beautiful by living for others. And how richly has her love been rewarded, especially by her intimate friends and relatives. They all tried to express their gratefulness by loving service. And how much kindness was shown to her by her many distant friends in the city. Surely, when we recall these beautiful pictures, the many blessings which she received, and her love to the poor and afflicted, we may well repeat at her casket this confession of gratitude: I will mention the lovingkindness of the Lord.

I am sure we are expressing the sentiments of the deceased when we mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord. For she herself joyfully joined in the praise of the goodness of God. She was one of those faithful, pious **persons**, who echo today the words of the Psalmist:



“Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house and the place where thine honor dwelleth.” She was faithful in her church attendance. Sunday after Sunday she could be seen in the house of the Lord, and she felt dissatisfied when she was compelled to miss a church service. Her mind, striving after high and ideal objects, was conscious of the fact that the greatest happiness cannot be found in the greatness and nobility of this world, but alone in the eternal possessions which are grasped by faith in the love of God through Christ. Persuaded of this truth, she faithfully confessed Him who alone can give us true peace and life eternal.

We bid the deceased farewell. She has been dear to many of us. We thank God for that which He gave to her and through her to us; but in our prayer we include this humble petition: Lord, let the light of Thy grace shine upon us while we are in this world; grant that our inner life may each day grow stronger in faith, love, peace, and hope, that when Thou callest us home we may depart in peace to the home above, where with the host of the redeemed we shall, in the highest sense of the word, mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord. Amen.

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#### XLIV.

A MAIDEN LADY, EIGHTY-SIX YEARS OLD.

I Kings 19:4.

“It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life.” Thus may this aged Christian, at whose grave we have

gathered, often have spoken, as did the prophet, when in a severe inner conflict over the futility of hard labor and aggrieved at his ill success, he wished to die in the wilderness. This deceased disciple of the Lord too, considering the little strength she possessed, bore many a heavy burden during her life. During the last few years she suffered many of the inconveniences and hardships of old age. Her eyes grew dimmer day by day, and her hearing less distinct; and when these senses began to fail, she withdrew from human companionship and lived a life closer to God; for she longed to be at home with Him. It seemed as though the roots of the tree of her life had died and the slightest wind would blow it down. Death came, shook this tree, and as there was no strength to withstand the shock, it fell. It seemed an answer to her prayer; for she longed for that hour. She was prepared to leave this sinful and unholy world. Death had become a friend to her, and a messenger of peace, who at his coming would say to her: Come to the marriage; for all things are now ready. She believed that he would take her into the arms of her Saviour, and that when she awoke from her last sleep, she would awake to the happiness of her Father's realm. Her waiting for the summons of her Father seemed long to her, and often she thought the Lord had forgotten her. At such times, the doleful words of the prophet came to her mind. It is enough; now, Lord, take away my life. She thought: I have fought enough; I have suffered and borne enough; I have been a pilgrim here long enough; and I long to go home. I am tired of walking here and am weary of my

life. I would gladly lay down the staff of my pilgrimage on my grave, and commit my body into God's keeping.

This life must sometimes have seemed to her a long journey through the wilderness. For, though many a dear relative visited her and ministered to her comfort, her path through life was lonely and desolate, and sometimes she must have felt that she was sitting by Elijah, under the juniper tree, and was tormented by its needles, eating of its bitter fruit, and finding but little shelter under its small branches. But we know that the bitter fruit is wholesome, and that a life unassuming and full of privations is an image of this tree. A life unassuming and full of privations the deceased, indeed, lived, and when the bitter fruit of suffering was administered to her by the gracious Physician, it was to serve her soul for the rest. Now she will be well eternally.

When one says to the Redeemer: It is enough; now, Lord, take away my life, He sometimes is in no haste to do so, but keeps us waiting until His own time has come, and says to us as the angel to Elijah: "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for thee." But the end is surely coming. At last the Lord will say: "Now it is enough; now thou hast borne thy cross long enough." Now thou hast fought and suffered and sorrowed long enough. And then, when this longing prayer breaks forth from the heart, Lord, take away my life, the amen of the Lord will blend with it; the clock of His time will stand still, and eternity will begin, where time is no longer counted by hours. But the Christian who departs this life believing in the risen Christ, knows that not only has the

soul parted from the body, but that it is going home to its Saviour, where it will be well cared for. The deceased rejoiced in the assurance that the soul of the righteous is in God's hand, and that no evil can touch it. We rejoice that she has found rest. And for ourselves and for all the mourners over her who has found a peaceful entrance into life eternal according to the will of God, we wish a righteous life and a peaceful death and the assurance that the Lord will take the anxious and the troubled one by the hand and lead the spirit to its rest.

Amen.

## THE BURIAL SERVICE.



### A. At the Home.

(Wherever it is desired, a hymn is sung, after which the pastor says:)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

or

To our God, who alone hath immortality, be honor and power forever and ever. Amen.

or

Jesus Christ, who was dead, but now is alive, be praised forever more. Amen.

Dearly Beloved. Since it has pleased God Almighty to summon our beloved brother (sister) from this vale of tears and, as we hope, has advanced him (her) to everlasting rest, and since this dispensation of our heavenly Father moves us to sorrow, let us in order that we may practice christian moderation, hear the word of God as it is recorded in (here quote passage):

(In ordinary cases.)

I Thess. 4:13-18.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

(In the case of an aged person.)

Psalm 90.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a

sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

(In the case of Adults.)

John 11:20-27.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that



even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She said unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

In the case of a young man or boy.)  
Luke 7:11-15.

And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

(In the case of a young lady or girl.)  
Matth. 9:18, 19, 23,-25.

While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My

daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

(In the case of a child.)

Job. 14:1-5.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And doest thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

or

Psalms 103:15-19.

As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant,

and to those that remember his commandments to do them. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

### LET US PRAY.

(A free prayer or one of the following.)

#### 1.

X O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth, shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally; who also hath taught us, by his holy Apostle Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for those who sleep in him; we humbly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him; and that at the general Resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

#### 2.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank thee because thou hast taken our brother (sister) out of sorrow and trial into everlasting rest. Dear Redeemer, we confess with

Job: "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord! Thy will be done, O Father almighty. Help us to be comforted and assured that we have not lost our brother (sister) but have only sent him (her) ahead to heaven, whither we desire to go ourselves. Establish in us, we pray thee, the faith that this body, which lies before us in the helplessness of death, shall on the last day be raised up with power and great glory, and that we shall meet each other with thee in the life everlasting. Grant us all thy Holy Spirit, to put us in mind how soon we may have to depart, to the end that we may constantly hold ourselves in readiness by repentance and true faith, to follow thee rejoicingly, whenever thou shalt summon us from this life of sorrows into thy heavenly kingdom. O thou, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

3.

Almighty God, who by the death of thy Son hast overcome sin and death, and by his resurrection hast restored innocence and everlasting life, to the end that we should be delivered from the dominion of the devil, and that by the power of the same resurrection our mortal bodies should be raised up from the dead; grant that with our whole heart we may confidently believe this, and finally with all thy saints, be partakers of the joyful resurrection of the just; through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

(Another hymn may now be sung, after which the pastor may close:)

They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

(In case the cortege moves to the cemetery from the house.)

Let us now attend the mortal remains of our departed brother (sister) to his (her) last resting place, but the spirit we commend into the hands of Him who gave it.

(In case of a church service:)

Let us now attend the mortal remains of our departed brother (sister, child) in Christian order to the church

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.  
Amen.

## **B. At the Church.**

(After the prelude the pastor may say from the altar:)

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.  
Amen.

(After this a hymn or an anthem may be sung.)

The following Scripture lessons are suitable to be read:

On death in general—I Thess. 4, 13-18; John 5, 24-29; I Cor. 15, 35-50; I Cor. 15, 51-57; Psalms 31, 34, 39, 42, 71, 73, 90, 126, 139.

On the death of an adult: John 11, 20-27.

On the death of a young man: Luke 7, 11-25.

On the death of a young woman: Matth. 9, 18, 19, 23-25.

In case of a sudden death: Luke 13, 1-5; Psalm 103, 15-18.

On the death of children: Mark 10, 13-16.

(After this the pastor may offer a free prayer or use one of the following:)

(In the case of a child.)

1.

O, thou Father of Love, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named! According to thy mysterious, yet always wise and holy counsel, thou hast called hence the soul of a beloved child and transported it into thy heavenly kingdom. Thou seest, Lord, the pain of these parents, who are called to walk the sorrowful path to a child's grave. Unto whom shall they come

with their sorrow but to thee, the God of all comfort, who, indeed, inflicteth wounds, but who art able also to bind them up.

Therefore, we look up to thee, our God and Father, as the one in whom alone we may find consolation. Teach these mourning parents humbly to rely upon thee and in confidence, patience and hope to submit themselves to thy fatherly will. Let a ray of that glory, which in the world to come will illumine us, lighten the darkness of the grave, into which the precious form of this child is to be laid. Let the separation become a new tie to bind these mourners the more firmly one to another and to attach them to their heavenly home. We praise thee, O God, for all that thou hast done for their departed child while here on earth, and for the glory now revealed to it among the host of the blessed redeemed, who rest in thee, and who rejoice in that heavenly glory which was promised for them and for all the children of God by Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son. Do thou grant, dear heavenly Father, strength and faithfulness to all parents, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so that by thy grace they may appear before thy throne able to say, "Behold them, whom thou has entrusted to us: none of them have we lost! Amen.

2.

O, thou living and eternal God, who turnest man to destruction; and sayest, return, ye children of men! We render thee heart-felt thanks for the goodness and



mercy, which thou hast shown within the short span of its earthly existence to this child which now thou hast gathered to eternal rest. We especially thank thee for thy grace and gift of Holy Baptism, whereby this child was made thine own and an heir of everlasting salvation. We thank thee that now its soul basks in the sunlight of thy presence, walking in the communion of the angels, filled with heavenly joy forever; and that on the last day, when body and soul will be reunited, it shall appear with joy before thy countenance.

Let these beloved parents and all other dear ones be comforted with the knowledge of thy good will, and heal thou the wounds of their sorrow. Let this be their consolation, that this child has attained to victory from strife; to deliverance from all sorrow, sin, and death, to life and salvation; and that in thy good keeping and care it is forever safe.

May it please thee to make us, who are still in the body, partakers evermore of thy grace and mercy, so that we may daily repent, and become as little children, and by faith be and evermore remain in the fullest sense thy children; and passing our days in thy service may finally be made heirs of thine eternal and glorious kingdom. Grant this for the sake of thine everlasting love and mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(In case of a young person.)

O Lord, our God, with sad hearts are we about to lay to rest the lifeless form of a young man (woman). In the midst of his (her) career has he (she) been called

hence, and his (her) early departure has brought to nothing the joys and hopes of all his (her) loved ones. Who may resist thy counsel? Who may question why thou hast done this? Verily thou art a mysterious God, yet thou art Love, and all thy thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace and not of sorrow. Therefore, be it done as thou wilt! We adore thy ways, even if unsearchable to us.

O Lord, thou hast guided the departed one with paternal love from childhood, and hast blessed him (her) manifoldly in body and soul throughout the short course of his (her) life. In the days of his (her) youth didst thou stretch out thine hand to draw him (her) unto thee, according to thine abundant mercy. Glorify now in him (her) thy gracious compassion in Christ to all eternity; and let us all, especially the young among us, by the early going of this one be awakened, to consider in season the things of our peace; to the end that, denying worldly lust, we may be faithful to Christ unto the end, and on the day of his manifestation in great glory, be able to meet him with joy and not with shame. From thee, the God of all comfort, do we implore consolation and strength for the family and all the friends who by the death of this dear brother (sister), have been deeply saddened. Establish them, we beseech thee, in the faith, that even through tribulation thou doest bless, that thou chastenest thy children for their good, in order that they may attain to eternal life.

Grant that we all may evermore humbly submit to thy paternal will, that under thy visitations we may be-

come wiser and better fitted for this life and for that which is to come Amen.

(In the case of an adult.)

O thou Lord of life and death! Again hast thou called from time to eternity a member of our congregation, and hast thereby reminded us of our own mortality. In deep humility we adore thy holy will, according to which, sooner or later, all the children of men are summoned to appear before thy throne. Thou hast graciously prolonged our lives to this day, in order that we might have time and opportunity to work out our salvation and continue our preparation for eternity. Help us, O Lord, that we may carefully employ the time of grace granted to us to thine honor and the sanctification of our own souls. Impress us deeply, we beseech thee, with the thought of our mortality, so that we may daily be reminded of our last hour. Let us realize in ever fuller measure the uncertainty of things earthly; that time is passing, and that soon we will enter the portal of eternity. By thy good Spirit awaken and arouse us to hasten and save our souls. Destroy within us all that may disquiet us at our departure, all the service of sin, all the power of darkness, all unlawful desires and anxious cares, to the end that our souls may be free and ready to leave this world, whenever thy holy will shall so ordain.

Let our whole life become one preparation for death, that we may await the hour of our release in all soberness and holiness. And when by faith and patience we shall have finished our course, and must pass through the val-

ley of the shadow of death, be thou then our rod and staff, in order that thy grace may be glorified in us. Grant us a joyful departure from this world, so that when our body is laid to rest in the earth, our spirit may depart in peace, holding fast in true faith to the Saviour. Gather us at last into the heavenly mansions, where we shall join thy glorified children in great exultation, and be united with them to behold the wonders of thy love and glory and praise thy holy Name, for ever and ever.

Amen.

2.

O, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, how indeed is every man at his best estate, altogether vanity! Thou hast set a bound to our life which we can in no wise pass over. Again this day is this truth evidenced, as we carry one of our christian brethren (sisters) to his (her) rest in the grave.

We praise thee for all thy goodness manifested in his (her) life from the day of his (her) birth; especially that thou didst receive him (her) in Holy Baptism, and didst thereby regenerate him (her) to that new life which is in Christ, and that afterwards thou didst graciously instruct him (her) in thy Word, and didst often feed him (her) with the body and blood of thine only beloved Son. We thank thee also for the days of trial with which for his (her) good thou didst visit him (her), and finally that thy gracious help was extended to him (her) in the last hour.

O thou God of all comfort, pour out of thy consola-

tion upon this mourning family and sorrowing friends; send unto them thy Holy Spirit, the true Comforter, that they may be able to discern thy love even in their sorrow, and humble themselves under thine almighty hand. Chiefly would we pray, however, that thou wouldst establish them by the blessed hope of the resurrection and of eternal life, which by his innocent sufferings and death Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, our Saviour, has secured for us.

Teach us all who accompany this pilgrim to his last resting place, so to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, and laying hold upon the grace of Jesus Christ, work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Help us faithfully to employ the short time of grace, so as ever to grow in faith, and being comforted in all our trials, crosses, misery and death, may we be adorned with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and in him finally gladly depart, to an inheritance of eternal life and joy in the eternal rest that remaineth for the Saints. Amen.

(In the case of a father (mother) who has left children unprovided for.)

O, Eternal God, merciful Father! Graciously look down upon us, who are in deep distress over the death of this brother (sister). Thy thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are thy ways our ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are thy ways higher than our ways, and thy thoughts than our thoughts. Help us in child-like trust to submit to thine unsearchable counsel, and under any affliction to hold fast the word of comfort.

Whatsoever thou doest, is well done! Let thy help be given to the bereaved ~~home~~, and raise up true friends and willing helpers to this fatherless (motherless) family. Heal the wounds of this stricken ~~husband~~ (wife) and grant that ~~they~~ (she) may be steadfast in that confidence, which has great reward. ~~To thy gracious care we commit the orphans, who weep at this grave. Be their provider and guide.~~ Preserve them in living faith, and cause even this painful visitation to turn out for their good.

O, Lord God! Thou seest all misery and trial. ~~Those bereaved ones commend to thee their cause; thou art the~~ Father of the orphan. Visit with thy strong consolation all those that labor and are heavy laden and grant them in the great day of Christ to stand with gladness before thy throne, in happy reunion with all those over whom they mourn here in time. Have mercy upon all the sick and dying among us, and bring their days to a good and gracious end. And when our last hour shall come, assist us by thy power, that we may look up to him who is the Saviour of our souls, Jesus Christ: that cleansed by his blood, we lay hold of the blessed hope of eternal life.

Amen.

(In the case of an aged member of the congregation.)

Gracious God, our Father! Thou hast done great things by this aged member of our congregation whose mortal remains we are about to commit to the grave. Thou hast verified unto him (her) the blessed word of promise, "Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you! I have made and I will



bear; even I will carry and deliver you.” Praise and thanks be unto thee for all the fatherly guidance with which thou hast attended this one in body and soul through a long period of years. And especially do we praise thee, that for his (her) preparation for eternity thou hast granted him (her) a long season of grace, and hast in joy and sorrow spoken forcefully to his (her) heart. Into thy hands we commend him (her), with the fervent prayer that thou wouldst manifest thyself the God of Love and Mercy to all eternity, even as thou hast done in the days of his (her) earthly pilgrimage.

Lord God! We know not when thy summons may reach us, nor whether we, as this departed one, shall attain unto an old age. Our times are in thy hand. But, be our parting from this world close at hand, or afar off, we pray most earnestly, that thou wouldst hold up to us daily the deep meaning of this our stage of preparation. Let us not be overcome and enticed by the perishing things of time. Direct our mind heavenward. Help us by thy Holy Spirit, that in the faith in Christ Jesus we may at last finish our course. And grant that in our last hour we may be able to profess in thy Name: “Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,” that he may be forever with the Lord. Amen.

(In the case of a person of questionable character.) ✕

O, thou merciful, eternal God, our heavenly Father, by the sad death and departure of our fellow-~~christians~~ *men* and ~~other mortals~~, thou art daily setting before us the general human misery of our lot and the mortality which



belongs to us. Grant us, therefore, by thy Holy Spirit, that wisdom and understanding which are from above; that thereby we may be deeply moved to awake out of our sinful sleep and spiritual death, to die unto all sin, especially the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. On the other hand, by true repentance, and by every evidence of christian love and patience, and through a hearty desire for things eternal, may we enter into the new life of the Son of God and abide therein; so that we may be able any day, yea any hour of our life here on earth, to realize a blessed end, and in the world to come be found worthy to escape eternal death and condemnation. And when the hour of our temporal death shall come, guard us against a sudden and fearful end, and let our souls be committed into thy hands, that like Simeon we may depart in peace, assured of eternal salvation, according to thy word of promise, "Blessed and holy is he, that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ," through the selfsame, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen. z

(After another hymn the sermon, followed by personal remarks, when such are desired. The Lord's Prayer and the Benediction.)

### C. At the Grave.

(A hymn may be sung, after which the pastor says, standing at the head of the grave):

Man, that is born of woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut

down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?

Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal; suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee.

Since it has pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother (sister, child), we now commit his body to the ground. EARTH to EARTH; ASHES to ASHES; DUST to DUST, in the certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life when Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

## COLLECTS.

### 1.

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; we give thee

heartly thanks for the good examples of all those thy servants, who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors. And we beseech thee, that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2.

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth, shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth, and beliveth in him, shall not die eternally; who also hath taught us, by his holy Apostle Saint Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for those who sleep in him: we humbly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him; and that, at the general Resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.















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